



CENTRAL FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

First Year
TRANSFORMATION
Report



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The Education Alliance at Brown University

Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University

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Table of Contents

Figures

Introduction	1
Overview of the Transformation Evaluation: Year 1	3
I. Participants and Methods	4
II. Strategic Goal 1	7
Increase the Graduation Rate and Decrease the Dropout Rate	
III. Strategic Goal 2	18
Improve Student Proficiency in Mathematics and Maintain Improvement in English Language Arts Proficiency	
IV. Strategic Goal 3	31
Improve the Culture and Climate of the School	
V. Summary	44
VI. Recommendations	48
Conclusion	51
Appendix A	53
Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools	
Appendix B	69
Central Falls High School Staff Survey Protocol	
Appendix C	73
Student Attendance before and after Guide 2 Success	
Appendix D	74
Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Advisory	
Appendix E	77
Teacher and Staff Absences Rates, School Year 2010-2011	
Appendix F	78
Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Performance Management	
Appendix G	81
Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Transformation Progress	
Appendix H	83
Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Suggested Improvements	

Figures

Fig. 1. Number of Interviews and Focus Groups Conducted, by Participant Group	4
Fig. 2. Number and Response Rates of Survey Participants	5
Fig. 3. Student and Staff Characteristics at Central Falls High School, 2010-2011	6
Fig. 4. Student Graduation Rates, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010	7
Fig. 5. Student Dropout Rates, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010	8
Fig. 6. Strengths and Challenges within Multiple Pathways Programs	12
Fig. 7. Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Advisory	14
Fig. 8. Grade 11 Student Proficiency on the Mathematics NECAP	18
Fig. 9. Percentage of Students Passing Their Mathematics Course, 2010-2011	19
Fig. 10. School Mathematics Grades Earned by Quarter, 2010-2011	21
Fig. 11. Weekly Usage of Study Island, September 2010 – May 2011	22
Fig. 12. Performance Trend for Study Island	23
Fig. 13. Central Falls High School PSAT Scores, 2009 and 2010: Number of Students Scoring 45 or More	24
Fig. 14. Mean SAT Scores: Math, Verbal, and Writing	24
Fig. 15. Grade 11 Student Proficiency on the Reading NECAP	25
Fig. 16. Staff Survey Findings: Curricular Planning	26
Fig. 17. Staff Survey Findings: Teaching Practices	26
Fig. 18. Staff Survey Findings: Classroom Curricula	27
Fig. 19. Staff Survey Findings: Professional Development	29
Fig. 20. Student Attendance Rates, 2009–2011	32
Fig. 21. Examples of CFHS Teacher and Other Staff Perceptions of Performance Management	34
Fig. 22. Staff Survey Findings: Reform Climate and Culture	37
Fig. 23. Student Behavior Incidents by Grade Level	41
Fig. 24. Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Year 1 Progress	45
Fig. 25. Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Further Improvements Needed	46

Introduction

In January 2010, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) identified Central Falls High School (CFHS) as one of the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools. Though Central Falls School District has been in state-administered corrective action since 2002, CFHS achievement has remained among the lowest in the state. Some of the October 2009 results from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) achievement data, which the state used to make its decision, included:

- 7 percent of 11th graders are proficient in mathematics
- 55 percent of 11th graders are proficient in reading
- The school has a graduation rate of 48 percent

According to RIDE's *Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools*, local education agencies (LEAs) with one or more persistently lowest-achieving schools must choose from one of four "turnaround" models that are designed to radically alter status quo conditions in the school and provide students with enhanced opportunities for an excellent education. The four possible models available to LEAs are:

- Closure
- Restart
- Transformation
- Turnaround¹

Closure shuts down a school, and restart requires the hiring of an external provider – a charter or educational management organization. Transformation and turnaround are actually very similar models. Staffing is the primary difference between them; while both require replacing the principal, transformation works with existing staff. Turnaround, on the other hand, requires that all teachers resign and limits the proportion rehired to 50 percent.

The Central Falls School District (CFSD) and the Central Falls Teachers Union (CFTU) considered the transformation model but could not come to an agreement initially around "assurances" designed to lengthen the school day, increase professional development, and deepen teacher-student relationships. Citing a lack of resources, as well as a Rhode Island law requiring employee notification of termination for the following school year by March 1, the superintendent recommended the turnaround model. When the Central Falls Board of Trustees approved the adoption of the turnaround model in February 2010 and teachers received their termination notices, the decision became national news and drew the attention of President Barack Obama, Education Secretary Arne Duncan, and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, among many others. Depending on the observer's perspective, this one high school district became symbolic of the citizenry's tendency to disrespect and blame teachers for the country's education woes, union-busting, a school district wrenching power from an entrenched labor union, or all that was wrong or right with federal education policy.

¹ Please see RIDE's *Protocol for Interventions: Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools* in Appendix A for complete definitions of these four models.

It was a difficult time for all involved. Under intense media scrutiny, the CFSD and CFTU participated in more than forty hours of mediation and agreed to rescind the teachers' termination letters and work together to improve Central Falls High School using the transformation model. Specifically, this model calls for:

- Replacement of the school leader
- Rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers
- A commitment to consistent use of data to drive decision making, revisions to reform strategies, and approaches to instruction
- Operational flexibility for administrators, allowing for extended learning time, unfettered use of school/district resources, creative use of instructional time available within the school day with the ability to revise that use based on results, etc.
- Appointment of a turnaround officer or turnaround office to oversee the LEA's reform efforts

Central Falls administration hired a leadership team, including two co-principals and a transformation officer, during the summer of 2010. The leadership team immediately drafted the transformation action plan required by RIDE.

This report summarizes progress toward the goals outlined in the action plan and summarizes stakeholders' perceptions of the first year of implementation, including challenges, opportunities, and areas for improvement.

Overview of the Transformation Evaluation: Year 1

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) and The Education Alliance (TEA) at Brown University have collaborated to evaluate the transformation process at CFHS. TEA conducted leadership team interviews, classroom observations, and the analysis of survey and school performance data, while AISR focused on an in-depth, qualitative study of key participants. The overarching focus of the study is the progress CFHS has made toward the three strategic goals created in the action plan:

1. Increase the graduation rate and decrease the dropout rate.
2. Improve student proficiency in mathematics and maintain improvement in English language arts (ELA) proficiency.
3. Improve the culture and climate of the school.

Given the complexity of the transformation process, a multifaceted evaluation approach was employed. The design incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods including stakeholder interviews, focus groups, observations, survey analysis, and analysis of several student, teacher, and school-level indicators. Evaluators have synthesized data from the multiple sources to examine the context, practices, and progress of the reform efforts.

This initial report highlights the successes and challenges of the first transformation year at CFHS. An interim report detailing Year 2 of the transformation will be written in the summer of 2012, and a final report will be compiled in the summer of 2013. Together, these three reports will provide a comprehensive overview of the collective lessons learned in the transformation of this persistently lowest-achieving school.

In the current report, Section I provides an overview of the various participants and methods utilized in the evaluation. The next three sections describe the progress CFHS has made toward each of the three strategic goals in the first year of transformation. Finally, Sections V and VI offer a summary of the evaluation and recommendations for continued improvement.

I. Participants and Methods

Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups

Throughout the first year, the evaluation team conducted multiple interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in the district. Participating teachers represented veteran and more novice teachers from all teams/academies and grade levels at the high school. Community members included alumni, members of the board of regents, leaders in charter

schools serving Central Falls students, city council members, members of local faith-based institutions, parents, and members of the Performance Management “Bench,” an external group of certified evaluators. School leadership interviewees included the superintendent, deputy superintendent for transformation, high school principal, assistant director of special education, and executive director for family assistance and student supports. Interview and focus group protocols were developed to gain students’

FIGURE 1

Number of Interviews and Focus Groups Conducted, by Participant Group

Interview	Teachers and staff	33
	School leadership	7
	Community members	13
	Academic Enhancement Center director	1
	Mathematics team leader	1
	Mathematics consultant	1
Focus Group	Teachers	2
	Students	7

and teachers’ perspective on the progress and challenges to the first year of transformation efforts at CFHS. Where possible, the protocols were aligned among participant groups to allow the evaluators to examine responses from multiple perspectives. Figure 1 summarizes the number of interviews and focus groups, by participant group.

Observations

The evaluation team conducted end-of-year observations of four mathematics and three advisory classes. The observed mathematics classes represented a range of grade levels, student ability levels, and math content. Two upper house (grades 11 and 12) and one lower house (grades 9 and 10) advisory periods were observed. During the mathematics observations, evaluators noted how instructional time was spent (e.g., whole-class instruction, small-group work, classroom management); instructional strategies (e.g., lesson purpose, student engagement, differentiated instruction); and classroom environment (e.g., classroom resources and interactions). During advisory observation, evaluators noted the teacher-student interactions and the topics discussed. The team also conducted observations of five professional development sessions and school events. During these observations, staff noted both the level of engagement and the general climate and culture. All observations were unannounced.

In Year 1, these observations were informal and used only to gain a brief overview of advisory periods, mathematics classrooms, and climate at CFHS. The evaluation team will collaborate with CFHS leadership to determine the frequency and structure of observations in Years 2 and 3.

Staff Survey

The evaluation team developed a survey to collect data on staff beliefs and attitudes regarding the first year of transformation at CFHS. Specifically, the survey asked staff to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with twenty-five items in the areas of: reform climate and culture, teaching practices, professional development, curricular planning, and classroom curricula. In addition, the survey contained four open-response questions that asked staff to describe their perceptions of the following areas: Year 1 transformation progress; further improvements needed at CFHS; advisory activities; and performance management activities.²

A draft of the survey instrument was reviewed by the superintendent, deputy superintendent for transformation, and union representatives at the high school. Suggested edits by these stakeholders were incorporated into the final version of the survey. A link to the survey was sent to staff members via their Central Falls Schools email account on June 14, 2011. All participants were assured that individual identities would not be disclosed in any evaluation report. Staff members were able to electronically access the survey until July 5, 2011. Two follow-up email reminders were sent to those staff who did not respond to the survey.

Forty-three staff members responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 51 percent. Within this sample, thirty-six were classroom teachers and seven represented other staff at the high school from leadership, guidance, school psychology, social work, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

Figure 2 displays the number and response rate of the survey sample. In the next several sections of this report, survey data will be disaggregated and displayed by teacher, other staff, and overall to provide an overview of the pattern and discrepancies that may exist among groups. When making comparisons, it is important to note the disparate sizes of the groups.

As with other evaluation components, the Year 1 staff survey will serve as baseline for the transformation evaluation. In Years 2 and 3, additional items may be added as appropriate to reflect the status and events of reform efforts. Evaluators will also discuss ways to encourage higher levels of staff participation in future years with district leadership.

FIGURE 2
Number and Response Rates of Survey Participants

	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Teachers	36	49%
Other Staff	7	70%
Overall Sample	43	51%

² Please see Appendix B for the complete staff survey protocol.

Student, Teacher, and School Indicators

Central Falls High School is a diverse educational community that served 827 students and employed 84 staff members during the 2010-2011 school year.³ The structure of the high school includes four lower house teams (grades 9 and 10); three upper house academies

(grades 11 and 12), an English as a Second Language (ESL) team, a Unified Scholars special education self-contained team, and another special education self-contained team. Figure 3 displays an overview of student and staff characteristics in the first transformation year.

To provide data-based evidence and context for transformation progress to date, evaluators have synthesized and incorporated student, teacher, and school indicators from multiple sources. Many of these data points will be

FIGURE 3

Student and Staff Characteristics at Central Falls High School, 2010-2011

Students	Student eligibility for subsidized lunch	61%
	Hispanic students	72%
	White students	28%
	Students receiving English language services	12%
	Students receiving special education services	24%
Staff	Highly qualified teachers ⁴	90%
	Teacher-Student ratio	1:10

DATA SOURCE: Student data in the table were obtained from the Rhode Island Department of Education (<http://infoworks.ride.ri.gov/school/central-falls-high-school>). Staff data were obtained from the CFHS MMS student information system.

presented longitudinally to provide an overview of existing trends from baseline years through the first year of transformation. These indicators and their relevance to the strategic goals will be described fully in Sections II to IV of this report. Specifically, these indicators include:

- NECAP scores, disaggregated by student subgroups
- Graduation and dropout rates
- Attendance rates for students and teachers
- Mathematics indicators (portfolio, classroom grades/failure rates)
- PSAT and SAT data
- Performance management data
- Professional development data (attendance/types)
- Multiple Pathways data
- Behavior management data

³ Data source: Central Falls High School MMS student information system.

⁴ A “highly qualified” teacher must meet the following federal law requirements:

- Be fully certified and/or licensed by the state
- Hold at least a bachelor degree from a four-year institution
- Demonstrate competence in each core academic subject area taught

II. Strategic Goal 1

Increase the Graduation Rate and Decrease the Dropout Rate

The first strategic goal in the transformation plan is to increase the graduation rate and decrease the dropout rate at CFHS. During the first transformation year, CFHS implemented several strategies to address this goal, including:

- Creating multiple pathways for high school completion
- Strengthening the advisory program
- Streamlining student support services, such as counseling and the Academic Enhancement Center

Together, these strategies are intended to provide added academic and socio-emotional support tailored to the individual needs of each student. In this section, we provide an overview of graduation and dropout rate data and then address each of the strategies in turn.

Overview of Graduation and Dropout Rates

Figures 4 and 5 display two years of longitudinal data on the graduation and dropout rates, disaggregated by student subgroup. In general, the graduation rate at CFHS improved

FIGURE 4
Student Graduation Rates, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

CHARACTERISTIC		YEAR	
		2008-2009	2009-2010
		Students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in 2005-2006 % (N)	Students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in 2006-2007 % (N)
All CFHS Students		48% (124)	52% (135)
GENDER	Female	55% (78)	51% (64)
	Male	39% (46)	52% (71)
RACE/ETHNICITY	Black or African American	56% (25)	45% (18)
	Hispanic or Latino	47% (80)	52% (99)
	White (non-Hispanic)	44% (19)	56% (18)
STATUS	Students who are economically disadvantaged	50% (119)	54% (123)
	Students with disabilities	30% (18)	38% (25)
	Students with LEP	48% (39)	49% (43)
RI State		76% (9,576)	76% (9,452)

DATA SOURCE: The RIDE website, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Applications/fred.aspx>. This information was extracted from the Frequently Requested Ed Data (FRED) documents: the 2008-2009 excel file, "c2006rates_public" and the 2009-2010 excel file, "c2007rates_public." The table displays the percent of students exhibiting each characteristic, with the actual number of students in parentheses.

slightly prior to the transformation process, although these rates are lower than the state average. The dropout rate remained stable over this two-year period and is more than double the state average. Graduation and dropout rate data for 2010-2011 will be available in the fall of 2011 and will be incorporated in the Year 2 Transformation Report.

Multiple Pathways Options

As part of the transformation plan, the Multiple Pathways programs were created by CFHS to help students overcome challenges that may prevent them from staying in school. Specifically, these programs aim to retain students and re-enroll students who have already dropped out or are at risk of dropping out. According to interviews with CFHS leadership, the purpose of Multiple Pathways offerings is to examine individual student needs and understand that every child has a unique life situation that may affect his/her learning and school attendance.

FIGURE 5
Student Dropout Rates, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

CHARACTERISTIC		YEAR	
		2008-2009	2009-2010
		Students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in 2005-2006 % (N)	Students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in 2006-2007 % (N)
All CFHS Students		33% (85)	35% (91)
GENDER	Female	29% (41)	34% (43)
	Male	38% (44)	35% (48)
RACE/ETHNICITY	Black or African American	27% (12)	30% (12)
	Hispanic or Latino	34% (58)	35% (66)
	White (non-Hispanic)	35% (15)	41% (13)
STATUS	Students who are economically disadvantaged	31% (73)	31% (72)
	Students with disabilities	38% (23)	46% (30)
	Students with LEP	35% (29)	37% (32)
RI State		14% (1,762)	14% (1,761)

DATA SOURCE: The RIDE website, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Applications/fred.aspx>. This information was extracted from the Frequently Requested Ed Data (FRED) documents: the 2008-2009 excel file, "c2006rates_public" and the 2009-2010 excel file, "c2007rates_public." The table displays the percent of students exhibiting each characteristic, with the actual number of students in parentheses.

The Multiple Pathways programs include:

- Day Program: Guide to Success (G2S)
- P.M. School
- Saturday School
- Early College/College Crusaders

The P.M. and Saturday school programs are based at the high school, and the G2S day program is housed at the Feinstein School building in Central Falls. Within each of these programs, childcare services were provided to students who had children of their own.

Day Program: Guide to Success

Interviewees described the G2S day program as a system of support that offers flexible scheduling as an opportunity for students to make up credits and accelerate their learning. The program also enables families to leverage resources that they may be unaware of, such as social and community services. Oftentimes these systems of support can be difficult to navigate and the G2S program staff helps families steer through the process.

School leaders told us that the day program has been associated with two major successes:

- Helping students stay in school due to facilitated conversations between school staff and parents about family financial constraints
- Creating an understanding that students will be more valuable in the workforce once they earn a high school diploma

G2S classes were described as similar academically to the classes offered at the high school, only in a smaller setting and with a more diverse group of teachers. A smaller program within the G2S model – Square Mile – serves special education students.

In the 2010-2011 school year, the recruitment target for the G2S program were fifteen over-aged and under-credited students who had already dropped out of school and an additional fifteen to twenty students who were at risk of dropping out. Actual enrollment was higher, with a total of sixty students identified to participate in the program. Of the sixty students, forty-seven enrolled and completed the program over the school year. Fifteen of the students who completed the G2S program had already dropped out of school and re-enrolled and graduated through the G2S program. One leadership team member described the impact G2S has had in the district:

Seeing these fifteen kids so excited about school was amazing. Kids will tell you that nobody believed in them a year ago. I think it's probably the greatest accomplishment for anyone in this city. These were kids who were not productive citizens a year ago. Now there are fifteen kids who have a high school diploma, who also have applied to CCRI [Community College of Rhode Island] and are thinking, "What is my next goal?" It's a huge positive impact for everyone in the community and the state.

Most of the thirteen students who did not complete the G2S program pursued other endeavors including:

- Three students dropped out of CFHS to accept full time employment.
- Three students enrolled in a dual GED/certificate program.

- Two students enrolled in a GED/CNA program (Certified Nursing Assistance Program with a GED component).
- One student enrolled in a GED and clerical program.
- Two students relocated outside of the district.
- Two students no longer attended school and were unaccounted for.

In general, G2S has had a positive impact on the attendance of students in the program. The average rate of attendance for the forty-seven G2S students while at the high school was 72.6 percent. After enrolling in the program, the average attendance rate for these students increased to 79.6 percent (See Appendix C).

Saturday School

Saturday School was another effort to provide students with an alternate means of earning high school credits. In interviews, respondents described the Saturday School program as a needs-based credit recovery program for students who failed a course or did not have an opportunity to take a course. Students completed thirty hours of class time, completed independent work, and were given required tasks for their portfolios. Two sessions were offered in the 2010-2011 school year with the following variations per session:

♦ **Saturday School Session 1**

- Operated from November 2010 to January 2011
- Included English, mathematics, art, and physical education
- Teachers taught one block each Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon
- Eighteen students attended

♦ **Saturday School Session 2**

- Operated from January 2011 to May 2011
- Included English, mathematics, art, art history, physical education, and science
- Teachers taught two blocks each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Fifty-two students attended

Four students participating in the Saturday School program were seniors. Three out of the four seniors completed the program and graduated successfully. Overall, sixty-eight students successfully earned credits through the program.

Students learned about the Saturday Program from guidance counselors and school-based announcements. Student “word of mouth” helped promote knowledge about the second session and attendance increased greatly. One of the involved teachers was appointed as the Saturday School administrator and helped facilitate the logistics of each session. During interviews, school leaders stated that student behavior during these sessions was positive, “a non-issue.” (Behavior issues are discussed fully later in the report.)

During Saturday School sessions, teachers had access to Study Island, a computerized software package to help differentiate mathematics instruction for students. Based on positive feedback, Study Island will continue to be provided in 2011-2012. Further information on Study Island, including student usage data, is provided in Section III of this report.

P.M. School

Another Multiple Pathways program option, P.M. School, was created to provide students with an opportunity to earn credits outside of the typical school day. This option appealed to several students who were young parents or held daytime jobs. CFHS administration also required that some students with low attendance records participate in this program.

P.M. School was described by school leaders as a school-to-work program that ensures students have a commensurate number of hours of academic and work experience. A personal education plan (PEP) is created for students, and work-study assignments are matched with student strengths, interests, and skills. The program consists of a six-hour day – Monday through Friday – which includes paid employment through Progreso Latino or other community organizations. The hours of school and work are customized to the individual needs of students. A popular example of this work experience is employment at area day care centers. These opportunities enable students to earn an income while still being academically responsible for their studies. On a final note, eleven of nineteen students enrolled in the program had higher P.M. School attendance rates than their day school attendance rates.⁵

Early College/College Crusaders

In the Early College and College Crusaders programs, high school students can complete necessary secondary coursework at a community college campus while simultaneously earning credit for college. Thirty students participated in the dual enrollment program during the spring semester at CCRI. Twenty-five students completed the program and graduated in June 2011. Student commitment to this program was evident in participants' willingness and dedication to taking the public bus to the CCRI campus every Saturday at 8 a.m. Program challenges included childcare coverage and students' unfamiliarity with navigating the public transportation system.

Leadership Perceptions of Multiple Pathways Options

Following a CFHS planning meeting related to multiple pathways programming, nine leadership staff members answered open-ended questions about their overarching perspectives about the programs. Responses were analyzed for themes and commonalities as part of this evaluation report. Leaders were first asked to describe what worked well and did not work well about the initiatives. They agreed on similar strengths and challenges across

⁵ Data source: Central Falls High School MMS student information system.

the programs, as outlined in Figure 6. Leaders were also asked to elaborate on how the Multiple Pathways initiative furthered one of the three strategic goals of the transformation. The reasons touched on all three of the transformation plan goals, not just the graduation rate goal, including:

- Effective virtual learning programs will improve literacy and numeracy skills.
- Engaging curriculum that is student centered and related to student interest will increase graduation rate.
- Building relationships with teachers and mentors will continue to improve climate and culture within the building.
- Providing more counseling to students will also improve climate and culture in the building.
- Providing an alternative program that is offered on a typical school day will help to decrease the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate.

Teacher Perceptions of Multiple Pathways Options

Teachers provided positive feedback about the Multiple Pathways options, particularly the G2S day program. Teachers inside and outside of this G2S program spoke about the need for a program that caters to students who would not otherwise succeed in the traditional high school setting. They spoke highly of the academic and personal growth and achievements of the students in the program, all of whom had struggled in previous years.

FIGURE 6
Strengths and Challenges within Multiple Pathways Programs

Strengths	Challenges
Small class size (ten to fifteen students) at G2S Day Program	Attendance and tardiness
Flexible schedule	Student misunderstandings about the purpose of different program(s)
Collaborative and team-based approach	No physical education (PE) offered to G2S Day Program students (only alternative PE, e.g., yoga)
Personalized relationships with teachers	Unexpected intensive mental health issues without proper support staff
Truncated schedule (students are encouraged to graduate when they are ready)	The referral process for P.M. School students was unclear
Students respect themselves and their potential	Snacks were limited and lacked nutritional value
Increased graduation for participating students	It was unclear how credits earned through credit recovery would be used

Strengthening the Advisory Program

The advisory program (one half-hour period per day) was reviewed by the leadership team and restructured in an attempt to help build better relationships between school staff and students. The fundamental purpose of the advisory program is to support academic success for all CFHS students by focusing on three overarching areas:

◆ Promoting Personal Development and Responsibility

- Helping students develop goals for the future and making realistic plans to achieve them
- Teaching students to take responsibility for their own education
- Fostering students' ability to become articulate self-advocates

◆ Building Relationships

- Providing a connection to an adult (the advisor) who will know the student well and serve as a mentor and advocate
- Creating a safe environment in which students can interact with each other on the basis of mutual respect and trust
- Developing meaningful ties among the school, the family, and the community

◆ Supporting the Portfolio Process

- Providing students with an overview of portfolio process and tasks
- Explaining that the portfolio is a graduation requirement
- Supporting student efforts to complete tasks and requirements at every grade level
- Monitoring the portfolio checklist
- Administering quarterly Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) goal-setting sessions
- Reviewing students' selection of work for their portfolios and offering advice in the selection process

Advisory Activities

A weekly schedule of activities was devised by grade level and began on September 9, 2010, and ended on June 16, 2011, for grades 9 to 11. A teacher representative, an advisory facilitator, for each house was appointed to coordinate and communicate these weekly schedules. The twelfth-grade class activities began on September 9 and ended on May 26.

Common activities across grade levels included orientations, community meetings, guest speaker engagements, and portfolio-related topics. Restorative Circles⁶ were also planned to occur twice weekly in all grades.

Planned activities for advisory for ninth and tenth grades emphasized relationship building and problem solving. Specifically, ninth-grade advisory themes included orientation, community, self and peers, and ILP's. Tenth-grade advisory themes focused on career exploration, team building, leadership, relationships, and ILPs.

⁶ Restorative Circles are a group activity designed to resolve behavior issues by using open communication and problem-solving strategies. The concept of Restorative Circles is part of the Youth Restoration Project (YRP), which is redesigning school discipline systems to seamlessly connect kids with resources outside of school and to strengthen the in-school community so kids learn to take better charge of their own lives.

Planned activities for advisory in grades eleven and twelve focused on decision making, resume writing, public speaking, college preparation, and job applications. The themes for eleventh grade featured planning for life, community service, college-related guidance, and SAT preparation. In twelfth grade, advisory focused on post-graduate plans, proficiency-based graduation requirement (PBGR) guidance, and oral presentation skills.

Staff Perceptions of Advisory

During early interviews with staff, a few noted the opportunity advisories presented to communicate and build relationships with students. However, others noted that the lack of support and the inadequate amount of time devoted to advisory contributed to poor implementation of advisory goals and activities.

On the survey, CFHS staff members were asked to respond to the following question, “Do you feel that advisory has been beneficial to students this year?” More than half of the teachers and other school staff who responded to this question noted that they did not feel the advisory period program was beneficial to students this year. Other respondents indicated that advisory did have some positive effects on students, but many staff expressed that the program needed further organization and refinement to be successful. Figure 7 shows some exemplar quotes that capture both sides of the staff perspective about advisories.⁷

FIGURE 7
Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Advisory

Theme	Respondent Group	Exemplar Quotes
Advisory was beneficial	Teachers	“My advisory has been a positive opportunity to communicate with students and have the opportunity to informally teach social and problem-solving skills.”
		“Advisory was somewhat beneficial because we reviewed portfolios, and I got to know students on a personal level.”
	Other Staff	“When properly implemented, many students this year have benefited from participation in advisory, most specifically for support with CCA’s [Comprehensive Course Assessments], portfolios, and senior projects.”
Advisory was not beneficial	Teachers	“Twenty-two minutes is not long enough to do anything meaningful. Lessons for the week are sometimes not received until Monday morning leaving little or no time for planning.”
		“The daily advisory block turned into unstructured time as the majority of teachers and students had no buy-in.”
	Other Staff	“The advisory period was too short. Personalization was attainable, but activities were limited due to time constraints.”

NOTE: Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychology, social work, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

When asked about how advisory could be improved, a CFHS leadership team member indicated that changes to the structure of advisory are planned for next year. First, the schedule will eliminate advisory from taking place during lunch periods. Next, the length of advisory periods will be extended from twenty-two minutes to “close to an hour.” These scheduling changes will enable advisory to be better monitored for fidelity to the objectives. The leadership team member elaborated on future plans for the advisory program:

It’s something structured and built into the schedule, but the concept behind advisory is that personalization can happen in different ways. I would like to see the future of advisories become more small group-oriented and more inclusive of staff throughout the building so that all staff from the custodians to the secretaries are being advisors to students.

Student Perceptions of Advisory

Students described advisory as a school-wide, non-graded requirement for all pupils enrolled at CFHS. Students explained that teacher-advisors changed each year. They expressed an interest in maintaining the same advisor throughout the four years of high school. Advisory activities varied, according to students. For example, one student compared it to study hall sessions while another student spoke about engaging in open discussions and playing games about school-related topics.

Positive aspects of advisory included the sense that “everyone got along,” which created a space for open discussions. Students also spoke positively about their advisors and described their personalities as “friendly,” “understanding,” and “nice.” Negative aspects of the program included criticisms that there were too many rules and it created too strict an environment. Another student said they liked very little about advisory other than the snacks that were provided and wished they had more time to work on their portfolios during the school year.

When asked about suggestions that would make advisory better in the years to come, students mentioned two specific recommendations: “I think we should have the same advisory teacher throughout our high school experience,” and “Ask us what we want to talk about; make us pick the topic.”

⁷ Please see Appendix D for a complete listing of all responses to this staff survey question on advisory.

Streamlining Student Supports

Another part of the plan to address the graduation rate was to streamline existing academic and behavioral supports for students at CFHS, including the Academic Enhancement Center and other student supports.

Academic Enhancement Center

Established in 2008, the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) is a resource setting for students to engage in academic work during the school day or after school. According to the AEC director, there are approximately 1,500 student visits to the AEC per month. In an interview, AEC leadership stated that the center promotes a self-directed, student-centered culture of learning, which is academically focused and personalized. In addition, collaborative relationships with the high school's faculty, guidance counselors, staff, administration, and its students have been developed. Many teachers now conduct classes in the AEC, utilizing technology to improve research and produce class projects, portfolio-related tasks, Comprehensive Course Assessments, and other major projects. Currently the AEC has twenty-one laptops and one color printer available to students.

The primary responsibilities of the AEC director for the 2010-2011 school year were: developing partnerships with Rhode Island-based universities; recruiting tutors who were qualified to meet the unique needs of Central Falls students; and developing and planning summer programs such as Early College. AEC leadership described several successes of the AEC during the 2010-2011 school year, highlighted below:

- Tutors were utilized in multiple pathways programs, and resources were shared between the AEC and Multiple Pathways programs.
- If necessary, tutors talked with parents to communicate project or assignment details.
- Eight ESL students were given a senior research project as an alternative assignment to their portfolios when the portfolios were determined to be inadequate according to graduation requirements.
- All students fulfilled their new assignments with the support of tutors at the AEC and were able to graduate when expected.

Improvements planned for the AEC next year include: expanding the space to include twenty-five new computers, chairs, a new countertop, and a printer; hiring an assistant to run the basics of the AEC while the director focuses more on program development; implementing a monitoring system that tracks failing students; using data to identify the needs of the students and programs offered within the AEC; using teacher referrals to quickly identify students in need of additional academic support; and continuing to make the AEC an academically safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment by adding color, posters, and decorations to the space.

Several teachers mentioned the AEC, unprompted, during staff interviews. These teachers viewed the AEC as a valuable academic and technology resource for both teachers and students. For example, when asked about resources students receive to be successful, one staff member noted:

I believe the AEC is a good thing. Kids go in there and get help and get tutored by other college students and other people. I think that's [a] good thing that [is] going on and [is] beneficial.

Other Student Supports

Like most high schools, CFHS employs guidance counselors to address a wide range of student needs. However, some respondents cited the student-to-counselor ratio as an obstacle to providing the level of assistance students needed. An executive director for family assistance and student supports was hired in early 2011 to improve services by creating a roadmap and assessment tool of various agencies and support systems that exist within the Central Falls community. CFHS leadership hopes this resource will provide assistance to families and students facing social and economic issues that may prevent them from effectively engaging with the school community.

A leadership team member commented on how the school works with parents when students are falling behind or having other difficulties. A school team, which may include social workers, the school psychologist, a speech pathologist, and community social service agencies, meets with the student and his/her family. At the meeting, the team discusses and writes a plan addressing academics as well as social services the student/family may need. This provides both individualized attention to students and builds a partnership with families to ensure their continued support.

Despite these supports, several teachers and staff commented on the challenges faced by students in Central Falls that negatively impact student achievement, including living in poverty, low English language proficiency, parenting responsibilities, and various other home challenges. Among the teachers we spoke to, there was little doubt that such challenges made both teaching and learning more difficult. However, there did seem to be differing perspectives among teachers about whether CFHS – through good instruction and useful supports – could help students achieve, despite the challenges. As one teacher commented:

There are those that blame the environmental contingencies, and there are some of us who feel that it's a combination of both things, but certainly here's an opportunity to have an intervention that is successful in helping the students succeed.

Summary of Strategic Goal 1

CFHS has implemented several new programs and attended to existing student supports to increase the graduation rate and decrease the dropout rate. All of the Multiple Pathways options programs (Guide to Success, Saturday School, P.M. school, and College Crusaders) successfully enrolled students, many of whom graduated or recovered necessary credits as a result of their involvement with these programs. Increased tutoring efforts and student accessibility to computers provided through the AEC helped students meet portfolio and graduation requirements. Changes made to strengthen the advisory program showed mixed results according to teacher, staff, and student data, indicating that further improvements are needed to meet program objectives.

III. Strategic Goal 2

Improve Student Proficiency in Mathematics and Maintain Improvement in English Language Arts Proficiency

The second strategic goal focuses primarily on improving mathematics proficiency, as measured on the NECAP. To improve mathematics proficiency, four improvement strategies were implemented in 2010-2011 to address student performance:

- A math lead was named to spearhead improvement efforts within the department.
- A math consultant was hired to help develop a new math curriculum, under development for much of the year.
- A math intervention program was scheduled into the school day, with support from the math consultant and the math lead.
- Study Island, a computer-related math intervention, was implemented within the building.

FIGURE 8
Grade 11 Student Proficiency on the Mathematics NECAP

CHARACTERISTIC		YEAR		
		2008-2009 % Proficient (N)	2009-2010 % Proficient (N)	2010-2011 % Proficient (N)
All CFHS Students		4% (7)	7% (15)	8% (14)
GENDER	Female	1% (1)	5% (6)	5% (4)
	Male	6% (6)	10% (9)	10% (9)
RACE/ETHNICITY	Black or African American	0% (0)	8% (2)	–
	Hispanic or Latino	4% (5)	6% (9)	7% (9)
	White (non-Hispanic)	9% (2)	17% (4)	10% (4)
STATUS	Students with LEP	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
	Students who are economically disadvantaged	3% (4)	8% (13)	7% (8)
	Students with disabilities	3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
RI State		27% (2,894)	28% (2,929)	33% (3,496)

DATA SOURCE: The NECAP website, <http://reporting.measuredprogress.org/NECAPpublicRI/select.aspx>. This information was extracted from each year's respective School-Level Report, "Grade 11 School Results Report (Testing Year)." A dash indicates blank; i.e., fewer than ten students were tested. The table displays the actual number of students in parentheses after the percent proficient figure.

Improving Mathematics Proficiency

Figure 8 displays NECAP mathematics scores at CFHS over the past three years. NECAP mathematics scores show small improvement gains over a three-year period. In 2010-2011, 8 percent of tested students met proficiency on this examination. Although NECAP scores show slight longitudinal growth, the percentage of students meeting proficiency is well below the Rhode Island state average. It should be noted that NECAP tests were administered in October 2010, just one month into the 2010-2011 school year, which is before the implementation of many new mathematics initiatives in Central Falls. The fall 2011 NECAP administration will represent student performance after the first year of transformative efforts; the Year 2 Transformation Evaluation will detail these findings.

Student Grades in Mathematics Courses

To understand mathematics achievement, mathematics course grades were also examined. Four math classes (three math courses and one math-related course) are required for students to pass and graduate based on the team-based teaching model/schedule at the high school. Math courses offered within the school include: real world math (problem-solving), statistics, pre-algebra, algebra I, algebra II, pre-calculus, and geometry. Math-related courses include: business math, accounting, and physics. Teachers are assigned to teams and primarily teach pre-algebra, algebra I, and geometry courses.

Figure 9 displays the number of students who passed their assigned math class, by team and academy. These data overwhelmingly demonstrate that the majority of students passed their math courses in 2010-2011. In general, the percentage of students passing mathematics is highest in the first quarter and decreases through the fourth quarter. This trend is fairly stable among teams and academies.

FIGURE 9
Percentage of Students Passing Their Mathematics Course, 2010-2011

TEAMS	QUARTER			
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
9A	88%	94%	86%	82%
9B	95%	82%	81%	70%
10A	94%	84%	80%	69%
10B	80%	91%	79%	76%
Arts Communication & Teaching Academy	88%	87%	86%	82%
Business & Hospitality Academy	96%	90%	85%	87%
Science & Health Academy	92%	87%	87%	82%
ESL	87%	87%	77%	82%

DATA SOURCE: Central Falls High School MMS student information system.

Figure 10 displays the distribution of grades earned in mathematics classes by quarter in 2010-2011. Interestingly, these data show that across quarters, A's and F's were the most frequently earned grades.

Overall, approximately 20 percent of students are failing math, according to school records. These classroom data demonstrate an inconsistency with NECAP data, which show far lower levels of student proficiency.⁸

Mathematics Intervention

The math consultant and the math lead were involved in integrating and supporting the intervention program that was newly scheduled into the 2010-2011 school year day. The intervention block went from being a standalone program housed within the Academic Enhancement Center to a class within the overall school schedule.

The intervention program for ninth- and tenth-grade students consisted of the following components:

- During the first half of the school year, two days of math, two days of reading, and one day of digital portfolio were scheduled for students.
- In the second half of the year, the intervention focused on the skills students needed most and emphasized reading as a priority for PSAT and SAT preparation. Three levels of math were offered depending on student ability level:
 - Remedial level math (seventh- and eighth-grade content)
 - Mid-level math (Math Keystones curriculum implemented by a new staff member)
 - Math enrichment (building up to the NECAP)

Mathematics Curriculum

It's expected that the new math curriculum will be presented during professional development days for mathematics teachers in August 2011. According to the mathematics consultant, the curriculum has been reorganized to standardize all courses to the Rhode Island Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) and align with the Common Core. The professional development will identify resources that will be used to deliver and assess the curriculum and will build a timeline for implementation. The mathematics consultant commented on the process by saying, "The goal is to have one set of objectives for each course that will be followed by staff teaching the course. We started this work in the spring with the idea of finishing it in August."

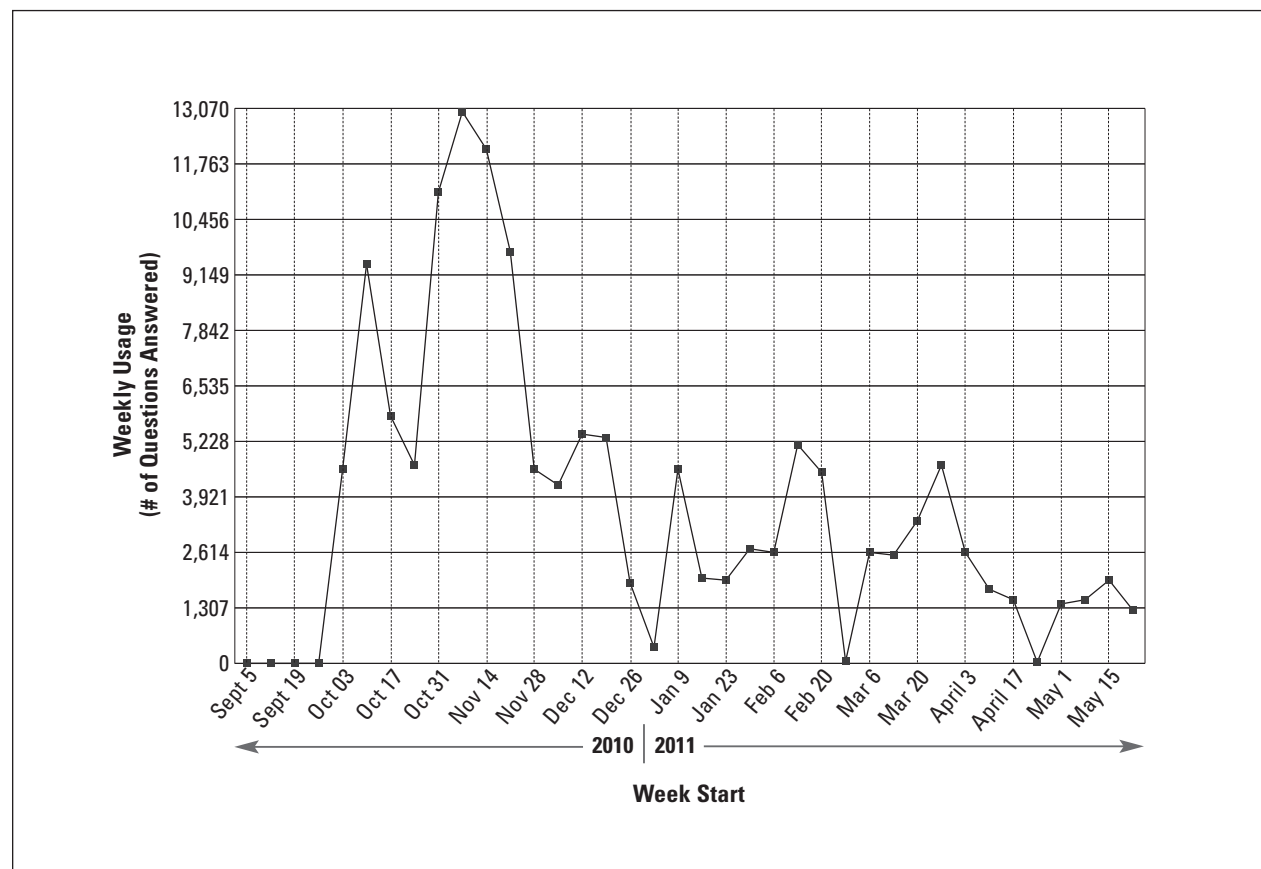
⁸ It should be noted that the Fall 2010 NECAP scores best represent the teaching year of 2009-2010. Fall 2011 NECAP scores will be examined in relationship to the 2010-2011 teaching year. In addition, NECAP is administered only to students in grade 11.

FIGURE 10
School Mathematics Grades Earned by Quarter, 2010-2011

GRADES	QUARTER			
	Quarter 1 % (N)	Quarter 2 % (N)	Quarter 3 % (N)	Quarter 4 % (N)
A+	10% (494)	7% (390)	7% (390)	7% (343)
A	23% (1,110)	20% (1,076)	23% (1,215)	20% (1,035)
B+	9% (466)	9% (462)	8% (430)	8% (395)
B	14% (706)	16% (852)	17% (934)	16% (836)
C+	6% (276)	5% (273)	4% (225)	5% (265)
C	10% (483)	10% (547)	12% (626)	12% (629)
D	8% (392)	9% (476)	9% (491)	11% (583)
F	20% (980)	23% (1,192)	19% (1,030)	20% (1,024)

DATA SOURCE: Central Falls High School MMS student information system. The table displays the percent of students for each letter grade, with the actual number of students in parentheses.

FIGURE 11
Weekly Usage of Study Island, September 2010 – May 2011



DATA SOURCE: The internal report, "CFHS Math Programs Overview." This figure was extracted from a Microsoft Word document, "CFHS Study Island."

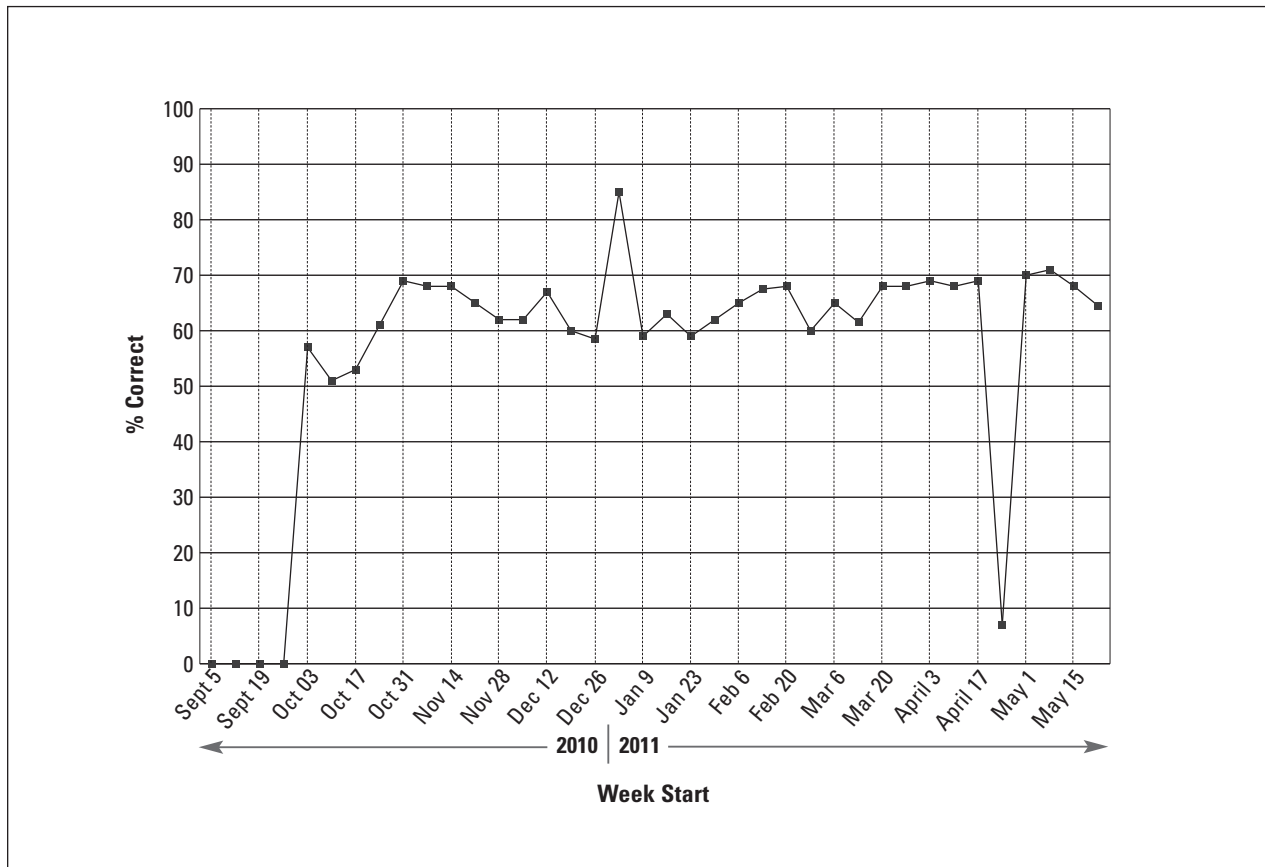
Mathematics Resources

The reform plan for improving mathematics included the implementation of a math diagnostics assessment tool. Study Island, mentioned earlier in this report, is the diagnostic tool used this year; however, it should be noted that the tool was not fully implemented prior to the NECAP assessment in October 2010. Additionally, a concern regarding limited computer availability surfaced in interviews.

Figure 11 displays the Study Island weekly usage data September 2010 through May 2011.⁹ These data show a downward trend in the usage of Study Island over the year. The program was widely used in the first semester of the school year during grade nine and ten interventions. Figure 12 displays the overall school performance in all of the Study Island programs. The trend shows CFHS students averaging approximately 65 percent performance in the program.

⁹ In Figure 11, the number of questions answered is a proxy for the usage of the Study Island program.

FIGURE 12
Performance Trend for Study Island



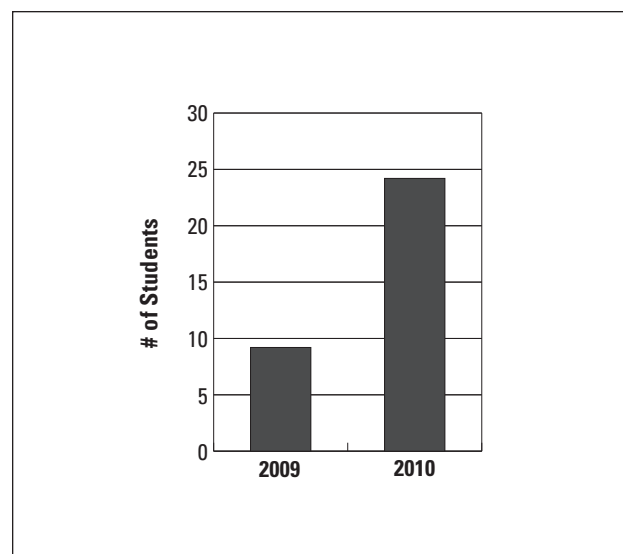
DATA SOURCE: The internal report, "CFHS Math Programs Overview." This figure was extracted from a Microsoft Word document, "CFHS Study Island."

Other mathematics resources and strategies that were intended to provide student math support in 2010-2011:

- Two new math teachers were hired, one in grade nine and one in grade ten, to help deliver the curriculum.
- The Academic Enhancement Center provided differentiated instruction in math to meet the various needs of students on a one-on-one basis.

FIGURE 13

Central Falls High School PSAT Scores, 2009 and 2010:
Number of Students Scoring 45 or More



DATA SOURCE: The report, "CFHS Transformation: Year One Report June 2011." This figure was extracted from a Microsoft Word document, "CFHS-Transformation-Yr-1-Report-6.23.11."

PSAT and SAT Scores

Figure 13 shows progress on PSAT mathematics scores this year.¹⁰ Most students took the PSAT in October 2010. CFHS leadership attributed these increases to the use of Study Island and the existence of a math lead in the building.

Figure 14 shows two years of SAT data for CFHS and the state of Rhode Island, prior to the transformation effort. SAT data for the 2010-2011 school year will be available in fall 2011 and will be included as part of the Year 2 Transformation Evaluation.

Staff Perceptions of Increasing Mathematics Proficiency

Data from interviews indicated that teachers and staff had at least general knowledge of the strategies focused on increasing student math proficiency. Many noted they generally saw an increase in students receiving supports for math. The math intervention team was mentioned and praised for the benefit it afforded students, although some

FIGURE 14

Mean SAT Scores: Math, Verbal, and Writing

CHARACTERISTIC	YEAR	
	2008-2009	2009-2010
	Mean SAT Score (N tested)	Mean SAT Score (N tested)
Math – All CFHS Students	383 (78)	374 (81)
Math – RI State	487 (5,489)	488 (5,718)
Verbal – All CFHS Students	385 (78)	390 (81)
Verbal – RI State	486 (5,489)	485 (5,718)
Writing – All CFHS Students	392 (78)	383 (81)
Writing – RI State	482 (5,489)	478 (5,718)

DATA SOURCE: The RIDE website, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Applications/fred.aspx>. This information was extracted from the Frequently Requested Ed Data (FRED) document: the 2009-2010 excel file, "2010 School SAT Performance"; please note that information for 2008-2009 is also addressed in this file. The table shows the number of students tested in parentheses after each mean SAT score.

¹⁰ The national average PSAT mathematics score is 49. Data source: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/scores.html>

early challenges were also mentioned. One teacher specifically noted the team “has been terrific. . . . They’re struggling because of the newness of it [but] they’ll figure it out.” The challenges mentioned by others revolved around beginning to build a math curriculum with corresponding supports when last year the curriculum didn’t exist. Despite these challenges, teachers praised the strategy for the benefits it afforded students.

Sustaining Focus on English Language Arts

Figure 15 shows the three-year pattern of English language arts (ELA) performance. In 2009, 55 percent of CFHS students tested met proficiency, a 10 percent improvement from scores in 2008. Scores in 2010, however, decreased to 44 percent proficient.

Staff Perceptions of Sustaining ELA Proficiency

Staff also noted that students were not receiving enough reading supports, especially in comparison to the math supports received. Teachers specifically mentioned how reading interventions and programs were in place in the past few years, few of which were currently available. Some teachers also mentioned that English language learners were in need of the most reading support but that this support was not widely available.

FIGURE 15
Grade 11 Student Proficiency on the Reading NECAP

CHARACTERISTIC		YEAR		
		2008-2009 % Proficient (N)	2009-2010 % Proficient (N)	2010-2011 % Proficient (N)
All CFHS Students		45% (82)	55% (112)	44% (78)
GENDER	Female	50% (42)	60% (68)	48% (41)
	Male	40% (40)	50% (44)	39% (35)
RACE/ETHNICITY	Black or African American	32% (9)	73% (19)	–
	Hispanic or Latino	43% (58)	51% (77)	47% (59)
	White (non-Hispanic)	66% (15)	64% (16)	40% (17)
STATUS	Current LEP Student	4% (1)	3% (1)	11% (3)
	Economically Disadvantaged Students	42% (52)	54% (87)	45% (48)
	Students with an IEP	14% (5)	32% (15)	12% (5)
RI State		69% (7,407)	73% (7,882)	76% (8,090)

DATA SOURCE: The NECAP website, <http://reporting.measuredprogress.org/NECAPpublicRI/select.aspx>. This information was extracted from each year’s respective School-Level Report, “Grade 11 School Results Report (Testing Year)”. Of note, percentages are the sum of Proficient (i.e., Level 3) and Proficient with Distinction (i.e., Level 4). A dash indicates blank; i.e., fewer than ten students were tested. Participation rates affect scores and the participation rate in 2010 was lower than the previous three years. The table displays the percent of students exhibiting each characteristic, with the actual number of students in parentheses.

Curricula and Teaching Practices

To collect information on perceptions of curricula and teaching practices, the survey asked all staff to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with several relevant items. Figure 16 displays general staff perceptions on curriculum planning at CFHS. When asked whether assessment of student performance has led to changes in their school's curriculum, about half of the respondents in both the teacher and other staff groups agreed or strongly

FIGURE 16

Staff Survey Findings: Curricular Planning

	PERCENT AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE		
	Teachers	Other Staff	Overall
Assessment of student performance has led to changes in our school's curriculum	53%	57%	54%
The curriculum is planned between and among grades to promote continuity	36%	86%	44%

NOTE. Teacher n = 36; other staff n = 7; overall n = 43. Teacher sample includes all classroom teachers. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychology, social work, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

FIGURE 17

Staff Survey Findings: Teaching Practices

	PERCENT AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE		
	Teachers	Other Staff	Overall
Teachers use data to improve their teaching	78%	57%	74%
Teachers are engaged in systematic analysis of student performance data	58%	43%	56%
CFHS has well-defined plans for instructional improvement	33%	71%	40%
Teachers at CFHS share a vision of effective teaching	67%	43%	63%
Teachers at CFHS are engaged in systematic analysis of their teaching practices	72%	29%	65%
Useful information to make informed decisions is readily available to teachers (e.g., about student performance, available resources, etc.)	44%	86%	51%
CFHS uses assessment data to evaluate teachers' instructional practices	61%	71%	63%
Teachers meet regularly to discuss student performance and instructional practices	75%	86%	77%
Teachers use formative assessment strategies to measure student progress	83%	57%	79%
Teachers are committed to improving student achievement	94%	57%	88%

NOTE. Teacher n = 36; other staff n = 7; overall n = 43. Teacher sample includes all classroom teachers. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychologists, social workers, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

agreed. In contrast, when queried on the statement that curriculum is planned between and among grades to promote continuity, a minority of teachers (36 percent) and a majority of the other staff (86 percent) agreed or strongly agreed.

The staff survey results for teaching practices are reported in Figure 17. With the exception of a few items (e.g., CFHS has well-defined plans for instructional improvement; useful information to make informed decisions is readily available to teachers) teachers agreed or strongly agreed with these items more frequently than did other staff. Notably:

- 94 percent of the teachers, but 57 percent of other staff, agreed or strongly agreed that teachers are committed to improving student achievement
- 72 percent of teachers, but only 29 percent, of other staff agreed or strongly agreed that teachers at CFHS are engaged in systematic analysis of their teaching practices

Figure 18 shows the results for classroom curricula. For this set of items, only teachers of ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies/history were asked to respond. Additionally, participants were given the option of selecting “Not Applicable” for this set of items. In general, less than half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed to the statements on classroom curricula. Teachers agreed or strongly agreed most frequently that the curriculum in their content area is aligned with academic measures, such as the common course assessments (47 percent).

FIGURE 18
Staff Survey Findings: Classroom Curricula

	TEACHER REPORTS		
	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree	Percent Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Percent Not Applicable
The curriculum in my content area is aligned with academic measures, e.g., common course assessments	47%	36%	3%
Pacing guides are used by teachers in my content area to ensure curricular continuity	17%	53%	17%
The pacing guides have helped me ensure that I cover all the necessary content in my classes	19%	47%	19%
The scope and sequence of curriculum topics in my content area are appropriate for my students	42%	33%	11%

NOTE. Teacher n = 31.

The survey also contained two items relating to the use of pacing guides, which are intended to provide teachers a step-by-step approach to addressing the key content in the time allotted for each course. The items were included in this first evaluation year to provide a baseline for subsequent years, since the implementation of pacing guides is planned across content areas to ascertain curricular continuity. In the current year, the pacing guide items garnered the least amount of agreement: only 17 percent of the teachers agreed that the pacing guides are used by teachers in their content area to ensure curricular continuity, and 19 percent of the teachers agreed that the pacing guides have helped them ensure that they cover all the necessary content in their classes.

Professional Development

Ten days of professional development were mandated for all teachers in the 2010-2011 school year.¹¹ Weekly professional development and/or planning time by content teams was offered every Wednesday and Thursday during ninety-minute sessions. A calendar and schedule of all offerings were provided to teachers periodically throughout the year as changes and adjustments took place. More specifically, professional development at the high school included the following structure and topics:

- Wednesday professional development sessions were literacy focused and targeted towards English, social studies, art, and foreign language teachers. Lead team teachers or designees were involved in delivering the professional development.
- Thursday professional development sessions were more numeracy-focused for math, science, physical education, and business teachers. Lead team teachers were involved in delivering the professional development.
- Special education teachers worked with their content areas colleagues in the areas they taught during planning times.
- A literacy consultant conducted monthly workshops on Wednesdays that covered vocabulary building, a continuation of reading comprehension literacy strategies, writing skills, and NECAP preparation.
- A math consultant conducted monthly workshops on Thursdays.

Professional Development Focal Areas

In response to the student needs at CFHS, some professional development also combined content in teaching practices and socio-emotional topics. These topics included: crisis prevention intervention, restorative practice, and the Danielson Model framework for teaching.

¹¹ In this section we focus on the Wednesday and Thursday professional development workshops. Performance management activities can also be considered a form of professional development. We address performance management later in the report.

Multiple cohorts of teachers also received training on the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) tool, which is specifically designed to aid content teachers who teach ESL students. To best serve the student population at CFHS, it is a goal of district leadership to have all staff trained on the SIOP protocol over time. One leadership team member shared her vision on how she would like to see professional development improve next year:

I think one of the things we want to improve is the cycle of improvement. By that I mean we would like for the data to be streamlined so that it's very easy to digest and understand trends in the building. Then that data should drive professional development. I'd like to see that cycle of improvement be better aligned. So, even though we're exposed to a lot of learning as adults in the building, I want to tighten the cycle. We will align what the data shows as a need with the training for teachers, with Learning Strides focused on the objectives, and very fast feedback to the teachers on what was observed.

Staff Perceptions of Professional Development

Figure 19 displays the staff survey results for professional development. Overall, less than half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed on professional development statements. Three of the professional development survey items asked specifically about the relationship of professional development and the students in their classroom; therefore, the results

FIGURE 19
Staff Survey Findings: Professional Development

	PERCENT AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE		
	Teachers	Other Staff	Overall
Professional development experiences this year have been closely connected to the reform vision at CFHS	42%	71%	47%
Professional development experiences this year have been coherently focused	28%	57%	33%
Professional development experiences this year have helped me understand my students better	28%	–	–
I have been able to use knowledge or information I gained from attending Professional development this year in my classroom	44%	–	–
Professional development experiences this year have helped me build new skills and identify strategies to better meet the needs of my students	31%	–	–

NOTE. Teacher n = 36; other staff n = 7; overall n = 43. Teacher sample includes all classroom teachers. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychologists, social workers, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

of these items are presented for teachers only. Forty-two percent of the teachers, but 71 percent of the other staff, agreed or strongly agreed that professional development experiences this year have been closely connected to the reform vision at CFHS. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers, though 57 percent of the other staff, agreed or strongly agreed that professional development experiences this year have been coherently focused.

Considerable differences between teacher and other staff perceptions of professional development exist, and interviews in this area confirmed these survey results. Several teachers noted during interviews that they did not find the professional development useful. There was a widely held sentiment that professional development was not an effective use of time. Specifically, several interviewees said small group discussions at the end of professional development lacked the direction to make them effective. One teacher did mention, however, that small-group time required teachers in the same subject matter area to work together, a practice they may not have been otherwise willing and/or have the opportunity to do.

Several staff mentioned the need to better tailor professional development topics to different teacher groups. Veteran teachers claimed the sessions were similar to many they had experienced in the past. Special education teachers specifically did not feel that most sessions were relevant to their needs.

Summary of Strategic Goal 2

Improving student proficiency in mathematics and sustaining ELA proficiency has been a critical focus for the staff at CFHS. Math expertise and personnel were secured to spearhead improvement efforts and develop a new math curriculum within the school. Additionally, a new computer-based diagnostic tool, Study Island, was implemented to support students in mathematics. Professional development opportunities were focused on literacy and numeracy instruction and best practices, as well as socio-emotional topics. Less than half of the teachers who responded to the survey felt that their professional development experiences were closely connected to reform efforts. Survey data also showed that 94 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they are committed to improving student achievement.

IV. Strategic Goal 3

Improve the Culture and Climate of the School

District leadership identified the high school's climate and culture as areas in need of transformation, even before the process of adopting a turnaround model occurred. During the 2010-2011 school year, four areas were targeted to construct a better environment for teaching and learning:

- Facilities and technology
- Parent and community engagement
- Behavior management and discipline policies
- Teacher-administration communication

Through interviews, focus groups, and surveys, we also identified two other areas that strongly impacted the school climate this year:

- Student and staff attendance
- Performance management system

The sections below address each of these topics (with the exception of school facilities, which were beyond the scope of this evaluation). However, it should be noted that all of the efforts at addressing school climate issues were affected by the struggle to select a turnaround model. Some teachers in interviews mentioned how they felt that “low morale,” “mistrust,” or “fear” permeated the school.

Student and Staff Attendance

An examination of staff and student attendance, as well as the performance management system, was conducted as part of this report. Appendix E shows a summary of teacher/staff absence rates by month, which ranged from ten to twenty-two percent. It is important to note that the calculated rates, as provided by the high school, do not include some instances in which a substitute was improperly documented in the system and includes absences ranging from one hour to a full day. The top graph shows absence rates including approved professional time, funerals, and personal days, however the bottom graph shows only the remaining absences. There has been speculation about the remaining absences. Whether the rate of teacher absences was due to a concerted effort on the part of the teachers to protest or undermine reform efforts, or whether this high rate of absences was the cumulative effect of working in a tense environment, or some combination of the two, is not clear.

Regardless of the source of teacher absenteeism, absences further stressed an already challenged school climate. Teachers noted that teacher absences were highly disruptive. Teachers commented that needing to cover for their colleagues cut into individual unassigned planning time as well as common planning time. While the majority of teachers recognize the potential value of common planning time, many noted how emergency coverage made it difficult for whole teams to regularly get together. Daily announcements asking for volunteers to cover absent-teacher classrooms caused disruptions during class time.

While staff agreed that absences were disruptive, they did not agree on whose responsibility it was to address the issue. One teacher noted the following:

[Teacher absences] is to me the biggest issue, the biggest problem. The biggest hindrance to progress at this school has been the teacher absence. It cannot be blamed on the teachers or the administration alone. It's both of them. It's so important that it be addressed. And I find that neither group is willing to stand up and say this is a huge, huge problem.

Although the teacher above spoke about shared accountability, several others felt it was the administrators' responsibility to address disruptions caused by teacher absences. For example, one teacher noted:

It's frustrating. Morale is down. Even students see the absences. Part of the problem is that there are no long-term subs. There are teachers that have been out for months. Students are getting no grades. Whose fault is it? Admin (all the way to Hedley¹²) that's what I think.

Students also noted during focus groups how teacher absences were highly disruptive of learning. Several students mentioned the high frequency of substitutes in their classes. In many of the classes with substitutes, students mentioned the absence of curricular work. Others admitted skipping classes since substitutes "don't care" and "don't know."

Figure 20 shows student attendance rates for Central Falls High School and the state of Rhode Island. Please note that state rates include elementary, middle, and high schools. In general, attendance at CFHS is just below the state average across years.

FIGURE 20
Student Attendance Rates, 2009–2011

CHARACTERISTIC	YEAR		
	2008-2009 %	2009-2010 %	2010-2011 %
All CFHS Students	86%	88%	87%
RI State	93%	93%	94%

DATA SOURCE: The RIDE website, <http://www.ride.ri.gov/Applications/fred.aspx>. This information was extracted from the Frequently Requested Ed Data (FRED) documents: the 2008-2009 excel file, "attRates_v.1.2," and the 2009-10 excel files "attRates_v.2.3. and attRates_v.2.0." Of note, NA = Not Available. State attendance rate includes schools from elementary, middle, and high. RI State data for 2010-11 will be available in the fall of 2011.

Performance Management

The RIDE Protocol for Persistently Lowest Achieving schools requires schools in transformation to “use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals” (see Appendix A). With the support of Mass Insight, a Boston-based organization that helps districts redesign how they support their lowest performing schools, and in collaboration with the Central Falls Teachers Union, Central Falls School District developed a performance management system based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching.¹³ The framework includes four domains:

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Classroom Environment
3. Instruction
4. Professional Responsibilities

To implement the performance management system, Mass Insight recruited a Performance Management “Bench,” six experienced educators who were asked to assess teachers on three of these four domains, and provide suggestions for improvement. Each member of the “Bench” had a caseload of twelve to fifteen teachers and conducted one to two formal (announced) and one to three informal (unannounced) observations. Members of the leadership team were responsible for assessing the fourth domain, professional responsibilities. This combined narrative was intended to be shared with each teacher to identify areas of strength and where they could improve their practice.

As shown in Figure 21 on the next page, comments about performance management solicited in the staff survey were a mix of positive and negative. Overall, more than half of all teachers had less positive comments to share, and the other staff had more positive associations with the activities.¹⁴

In interviews, teachers expressed differing opinions about the performance management system depending largely on the respective experience level of the teacher. Newer teachers seemed to be accustomed to this form of evaluation, having had prior experiences with similar systems. A few of these newer teachers specifically noted that they welcomed observations as an opportunity to grow. In fact, they suggested that teachers should be observed more often, both informally and formally, and that observations should be scheduled with fewer advance notices to offer a “truer” sense of a teacher’s ability. In contrast to junior teachers, some veterans seemed to find adapting to the performance management system more difficult. In general, senior teachers viewed the performance management system as a “gotcha” scheme intended to punish staff.

¹² The central office for the Central Falls School District is located at 21 Hedley Avenue.

¹³ <http://www.danielsongroup.org/>

¹⁴ Please see Appendix F for a complete listing of all responses to this staff survey question on performance management.

Regardless of their openness to performance management, most teachers had some complaints about its implementation. One concern was that evaluations were not adequately used to improve instruction. These teachers felt there was insufficient follow-through from the Bench members to help teachers reflect on their pedagogy or to link teachers to outside resources tailored to their needs. Some new teachers also stated that inconsistencies between observers led to a sense among teachers that the evaluation process was unfair and subjective.

FIGURE 21
Examples of CFHS Teacher and Other Staff Perceptions of Performance Management

Theme	Respondent Group	Exemplar Quotes
Performance Management Activities Were Beneficial	Teachers	"I believe my experience was extremely beneficial because I was observed by my director and a second time by my director and teacher leader."
		"Looking at data is extremely beneficial to design future practices."
		"Yes, they have provided teachers with growth opportunities."
		"It's somewhat beneficial but there are still some teachers who do not fully understand the evaluation tool. Teachers are very appreciative and respectful to the evaluators and are willing to build relationships."
	Other Staff	"Yes, it provided clear expectations and systemic feedback."
		"Performance management activities have led to increased accountability for all, relative to student achievement and success."
		"Some teachers have used the information to improve practice."
Performance Management Activities Were Not Beneficial	Teachers	"Performance management is seriously lacking a component that would help a teacher who is deficient to improve. There has been a lot of emphasis on pointing out deficiencies but no clearly defined plan or process to promote teacher improvement."
		"For new teachers, it was never explained, and for most teachers that have been here for years, they never got the proper training except for a book."
		"Performance management is supposed to help students do better. We have been directed to lower standards to assist students' grades; therefore, we are supposed to make them pass rather than try to help the student do better."
		"Too often the PD [professional development] is unorganized and the expectations are unclear."
	Other Staff	"It created a toxic and highly stressful work environment. If evaluations were good, there was no corrective action plan in place for the teacher to improve..."

NOTE. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychology, social work, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

Bench members interviewed seemed genuinely engaged in the work of the school and shared stories about how they had intervened with teachers and saw improvements in their practice. Both teachers and “Bench” members used the term “gotcha” to describe how the process was perceived by teachers, and “Bench” members knew they had to send the message that the system was intended to be a support. One “Bench” member noted that “Some Bench members carried that [message] well; others not so much.” Another described how, when asked by a teacher who was initially hostile to the process, “Who the hell are you?” and she responded:

I said, “To be honest with you, we [the Bench] offer a unique viewpoint. We don’t have the history. I don’t know you. I come in with a clear vision. I write it as I see it. There is nothing else clouding it. I come with total objectivity. I am here to help you.” He toned down. It made sense to him.

Bench members also agreed on the importance of making sure that they were all assessing teachers similarly, or “calibrating” their assessments. As one member related,

I’ve been part of a couple of calibration trainings. . . . They were very valuable. We need to be more aware of whether we have that inter-rater reliability. If teachers perceive that “Oh, [Bench member name] is an easy grader.” Then it is all over. We all have to be very consistent.

In addition to the calibration trainings, Bench members participated in weekly (at first) to monthly (by the end of the school year) conference calls with the CFHS leadership team, district leadership, and Mass Insight to discuss issues that had come up in the performance management process. This provided them opportunities to observe and, in some cases, mentor leadership team members. These interactions were positive. One Bench member commented, “That’s been great. I love the fact that the Bench includes the administration, superintendent, Bench members, all of that feels very positive.” However, Bench members expressed concern about Domain 4, the professional responsibilities domain, which includes teacher behavior throughout the school, not just teaching observed in the classroom. Leadership team members did not always follow through on their responsibility for completing this section of the evaluation. For example, a Bench member told us:

I would get [the evaluation narrative] written up and try to turn it around as soon as possible. . . . But it was not easy to get domain 4 written by the principal. I would sit and do the post-conference [to discuss the evaluation with the teacher] and I wouldn’t have the data on Domain 4. Or it [Domain 4] wouldn’t be great, and I would be in the middle, trying to explain something I didn’t know about. . . . I put observations on file with no Domain 4.

Another Bench member said:

Initially [the leadership team] did not have a system in place for assessing [Domain 4]. It was mainly about attendance and committee work – all things that [the Bench] would have no access to. [For example], I don’t know if someone is chairing the school improvement team. The leadership team would complete that section. In many cases, especially at the beginning of the year, it didn’t happen. . . . I found that it would get teachers’ focus away from what they should be on.

Teachers interviewed pointed to the professional responsibilities domain in their critiques of the system as unfair and inconsistent. As one teacher noted:

[W]hen it comes to the teacher evaluations, there are things outside of that [classroom observation] snapshot that are included . . . and it's misconstrued. [I've learned that] Not from my own experience, but from the grapevine, I think, and that's part of the culture. So I think that there's mistrust. I think that that is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Leadership team members saw the potential for the performance management system as one of the strategies for building buy-in to the efforts involved in transforming the high school. They talked about providing teachers with the materials, skills, and supports they need to be successful. But in the first year, there also seemed to be some pressure to identify teachers as either transformative or not. As one leader stated:

I think part of the reform is building the buy-in. How do we get people to come on board with the transformation? It's a lot of communication, trust building, equipping teachers with what they need, whether it's textbooks or calculators. . . . Part of it is through our performance management system, really seeing who is performing and who is not. And then some people deciding for themselves that they don't want anything to do with the transformation, so "It's time for me to move on."

These questions about the purpose of the performance management system affected the culture at the high school and, in particular, the relationship between teachers and school administrators. The perceived lack of clarity about what was included in Domain 4 and a perception that the performance management system was being used to identify teachers who were "in" or "out" stressed an already challenging environment. Several teachers noted that the mistrust created a "culture of fear" where teachers were afraid of being reviewed poorly and losing their jobs.

Teacher Supports, Collaboration, and Communication

The staff survey results for reform climate and culture are shown in Figure 22. For all items, teachers report lower levels of agreement than other staff. Additionally, half or less than half of participating teachers agree to these climate-related items. For example, 50 percent of the teachers, but 86 percent of the other staff, agreed that CFHS has a clear vision of reform that is linked to standards for student learning and development. Thirty-six percent of the teachers, though 71 percent of the other staff, agreed that staff and leadership openly discuss efforts to improve CFHS. Interestingly, half of the teachers agreed that CFHS has made changes designed to better meet the needs of its diverse student body; however, other staff unanimously agreed to this same statement. Finally, 33 percent of the teachers, but 71 percent of the other staff, agreed that communication between high school leadership and teachers has improved over the course of this school year.

The differences in teacher and leadership/other staff perceptions about the reform climate and culture point to a division that was reflected in interviews, focus groups, and observations. The relationships and communication between administrators and teachers has been strained and difficult this year; and only one-third of teachers feel that it has improved.

Particularly in late 2010, teachers described extremely low morale among their colleagues and were dismayed by the lack of attention to this issue. As one teacher stated:

In general very little effort has been made to address teacher morale. So climate, it's certainly been a lot about making students behave in a more scholarly way. . . . But to my knowledge no attention at all has been paid to how teachers are feeling.

The division between teachers and leadership was clearly reflected in teacher interviews and emphasized by “the gate.” To maintain confidentiality for personnel and student-related matters, and to protect their time and limit interruptions, CFHS leadership had a custodian build a rudimentary gate that separated the main office from the administrators’ offices. It included a sign discouraging teachers from going to the administrators’ offices. Teachers were also asked to make an appointment to speak with a leadership team member. The gate has since been dismantled, but it became a symbol for teachers of the administrators’ inaccessibility. As one teacher pointed out:

You walk into the office at any time and doors are shut. They don’t have time for us. Now there’s a gate up that says you cannot pass. That’s so blatant and obvious that they don’t want to know what we have to say. We’re in it together. We’re the ones teaching. We need the support. What does that say? To have the doors shut, a gate up?

FIGURE 22
Staff Survey Findings: Reform Climate and Culture

	PERCENT AGREE or STRONGLY AGREE		
	Teachers	Other Staff	Overall
CFHS has a clear vision of reform that is linked to standards for student learning and development	50%	86%	56%
Staff and leadership openly discuss efforts to improve CFHS	36%	71%	42%
CFHS has made changes designed to better meet the needs of its diverse student body	50%	100%	58%
Communication between high school leadership and teachers has improved over the course of this school year	33%	71%	40%

NOTE. Teacher n = 36; other staff n = 7; overall n = 43. Teacher sample includes all classroom teachers. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychologist, social workers, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

Many felt that stark lines had been drawn about who was “on board” and who was not. As a community member shared:

People have chosen sides up there. There is no redemption. If you were a union gun, there is no way for you to say, “I’m going to support this effort.” The opinions have been firmed up that this person is not to be trusted.

Even those teachers who expressed confidence in the level of communication with the leadership team noted that receptivity to communications depended on each individual’s relationship with leadership team members:

Personally, I can stop them [the leadership team] in the hallway and talk to them. They take time to hear what I have to say. But for other teachers, if they have spoken out [criticizing reform efforts], the LT [leadership team] is not as receptive.

Many teachers claimed that the leadership team heard their concerns but were unable to successfully respond to them. Some teachers did not feel included in decision making, specifically noting that the leadership team did not make an effort to reach out to them for their thoughts or recommendations. Others felt that there were not ample avenues for discussing challenges with the leadership team without the fear of being reprimanded or dismissed in some way, as discussed previously in the performance management section. These feelings were somewhat more prevalent among more senior teachers. As a couple of senior teachers mentioned:

In my opinion, the administration doesn’t place any value on anything that teachers that have been here need to say. They don’t want to hear our opinions; they just want to push their model forward, right or wrong.

If it doesn’t go along with what they want it doesn’t matter. They’re not going to value teachers’ opinions if it’s not what they want. . . . They don’t mean what they say. They lock their doors; we have to check and see if we can speak to our principals. We never see them in hallways. We only get reprimands. We get talked at.

Leadership, on the other hand, was working extremely hard to fulfill the many roles they had to play. A community member observed, “They are working around the clock. They are working like crazy.” Leadership team members consistently expressed the desire for teacher input and teacher leadership, but faced with the many demands on their time, they struggled to implement it in a way that felt meaningful to the majority of teachers outside the small group of teacher leaders. As a community member stated, “It’s more like command and control, not we’re all in this together. The relationship piece is really missing.”

Leaders were aware that there was room for improvement in communication with teachers. One of them shared:

[Communication] could always be improved. I think for the past month or so we [the leadership team] have made more of a concerted effort to be more present where teachers are by visiting CPT [common planning time], going to teachers who are meeting. We started by saying we’re always available to you, come meet with us, and what we’re also doing now is going to them. That’s made a difference. We also need to build other mechanisms that are more systemic. Like with weekly newsletters, sending them more information before it hits the media. This is all in the works.

Common Planning Time

The primary mechanism for staff to collaborate with others was during common planning time. All teachers met with their house or academy team for one period every day. This space was created so instructional staff could plan interventions for specific students, receive feedback and assistance from colleagues when developing lesson plans, and potentially develop interdisciplinary instruction. Several teachers indicated there was a wide range in ability/willingness to work collaboratively across individual teachers and different teams. The math department was described as a particularly collaborative unit. Members of the math department reported that common planning time was valuable to them. Even teachers who were not a part of the math department recognized that team's successful use of common planning time. The self-contained special education team also described themselves as a group who worked well together.

For other teams, the use of common planning time varied. Some teams reported difficulty collaborating, and members described meetings that were unproductive complaint sessions or unstructured, free-form discussions that varied in utility from week to week. As previously noted above, classroom coverage due to teacher absences made it difficult for teachers to participate during regularly scheduled common planning time. One team noted not having been able to meet as a group "for weeks." Another teacher mentioned that covering classes was "threatening" common planning time, with a different team member being out every day in a week. Finally, a few teachers also mentioned the lack of a necessary structure for teachers to collaborate within subject areas, not just across teams.

Behavior Management

Behavior management was frequently cited as a challenge that negatively affected the culture and climate at CFHS. In interviews and focus groups, especially those conducted in late 2010, teachers, staff, and students reported a lack of consistent rules regarding behavior management. In particular, they felt that using "restorative practices" as a behavior management model was the major contributing factor for poor student behavior because the model lacked firm consequences for students. Both staff and students felt that the in-school support (ISS)/restoration room did not help in deterring behavior incidents. In fact, students noted how some of their peers "use [ISS] as a way to get out of class. People go in there and do nothing the whole period." Students and staff noted, however, that the behavior issues and classroom disruptions could be attributed to a "small percentage" of students, specifically lowerclassmen. A leadership team member added, "Inconsistent rules currently exist within the high school; more grounded policies and procedures need to be communicated and enforced."

Changes to Behavior Management Processes

Due to the concerns about student behavior, some mid-year changes were made to the behavior management process. Four restorative specialists were hired to work with students outside of the classroom to resolve behavior issues by using open communication and problem-solving strategies that involve student participation and input. These specialists

are the first point of contact if a student misbehaves in class.¹⁵ When an incident occurs, the specified protocol is that the classroom teacher presses a buzzer to signal a specialist. Teachers write a referral of the incident, which is reviewed by the discipline team lead and entered into MMS, a new student information system that was developed in fall 2010. Any staff member who submits a referral receives an email from the discipline lead detailing the incident and the recommended solution. In addition, a behavior committee was established to address issues pertaining to period attendance, after-school restoration, and the creation of a handbook. This committee met through May 2011 and consisted of teachers, leadership team members, parents, and community members.

In 2011, new effort has been expended to evaluate each behavioral referral on a case-by-case basis and to develop a support plan to address the individual needs of each student. With some behavior incidents, a designated staff person (e.g., school psychologist, social worker, or outreach worker) supports the case. Depending upon the student needs, other professionals, such as health care professionals and community-based agency workers, might also become involved. CFHS leadership is hopeful that this new approach will decrease the number of behavior referrals and ultimately improve the climate and culture within the building.

Greater levels of documentation of behavior management strategies are also now required when a student misbehaves. Currently, all discipline referrals are tracked on MMS. Based on data entered into MMS, there are better understandings of how many student behavior incidents take place within a given school year. Figure 23 shows the number and types of behavior incidents documented in the past year. The evaluation team will use these numbers as a baseline to examine the levels and patterns of behavior incidents over the next two years of the transformation study.

Teachers and staff noted in interviews conducted in spring 2011 how student behavior issues, while still an issue, began to improve after having the full discipline team of restorative specialists and the MMS tracking system in place. The specialists allowed for behavior issues to be addressed more quickly and efficiently. Some restorative specialists did share with us concerns that teachers over-rely on the specialists, referring to minor incidents that could be addressed in the classroom.

¹⁵ Next year a new position, lead restoration specialist, will become the first point of contact to respond to the referrals.

FIGURE 23
Student Behavior Incidents by Grade Level

Code	Code Description	9th	10th	11th	12th	Totals MMS count
04	Assault of Student Peer	3	4	3	0	10
05	Attend-Cut/Skipped Class	1953	1824	561	238	4576
16	Disorderly Conduct	1221	845	111	120	2297
18	Number of Students Involved in Fighting	20	10	3	5	38
23	Harassment-Verbal/Physical	3	0	2	0	5
25	Harassment-Sexual	1	3	0	0	4
28	Insubordination/Disrespect	378	316	46	34	774
32	Obscene/Abusive Language to Teacher	114	94	21	12	241
33	Other	67	94	18	13	192
34	Technology-Unauthorized Use of Computers	0	2	1	0	3
35	Threat/Intimidation	10	6	6	5	27
39	Weapon Possession	1	3	0	0	4
	Overall Total	–	–	–	–	8209

DATA SOURCE: Central Falls High School MMS student information system.

DATA: Code 5 (Attend-Cut/Skipped Class) does not indicate that on 4,576 occasions, a student cut class. This code was used this year for “Admin Holds” as well, which are classified as times when students were held pending administrative action. After receiving feedback from faculty, Code 5 was documented differently allowing for the pilot of Period-to-Period attendance to be introduced. Code 4 (Assaults) and Code 18 (Fighting) are inter-related, and it should be noted that combined this indicates that forty-eight different students were involved in a fight and/or in the assault of another. Code 23 (Harassment-Verbal/Physical), Code 35 (Threats/Intimidation/Bullying), and Code 33 (Other) are codes that very often due to circumstance and or lack of documentation are coded upon evaluation as Code 16 (Disorderly Conduct). We are confident that with improved communications, the reporting under these codes will become more consistent and less arbitrary.

Student and Community Perceptions of School Climate

Students were asked within focus groups if they believed their teachers cared about how well they did in school; they expressed that the majority of teachers did care about their achievement. Some teachers offered to work with students outside of class and “gave advice” when asked. Students reported that some teachers kept their classes interesting by adding “hands-on stuff” and “relating computer time to an assignment.” Students also shared that they’ve observed other students being disrespectful to teachers, especially new teachers early in the school year. Students reported that levels of respect changed over time and improved by the end of the year.

Students have voiced frustration about the overall transformation process. In mid-December a small group of students gathered outside the high school. Students at the rally stated that they had gathered in support of their teachers, whom they said had been treated “unfairly” and with “disrespect” by the school’s administration. A couple of students present at the rally specifically mentioned being frustrated with teacher absences, which they attributed to the administration’s treatment of teachers. During the rally, students also expressed frustration with the lack of communication about the transformation effort and expressed a desire to be included in decision-making processes. Students suggested that a student assembly organized the same morning as the protest was an event that should have occurred much earlier.

Young Voices, a Rhode Island-based youth organizing nonprofit, has been working with a group of students to increase and improve student engagement at the high school. Students have administered and analyzed a schoolwide student survey specifically examining the CFHS transformation. They hope to increase the importance of student opinion and to achieve greater influence with the administrations moving forward. Beyond the Young Voices survey, student government was established and students voted for their class representatives.

Looking across the data, it was clear that in the absence of timely, clear communication, students were getting inaccurate or distorted information about many of the most salient components of the overall reform effort, such as performance management and transformation. When students were asked follow-up questions, they were frequently unable to elaborate. For example, students who reported that the administration was disrespectful of teachers were unable to present examples. Some even admitted that they had simply heard this stated by teachers and were repeating what they heard. Other students were stressed about the possibility that the high school would be reconstituted. When asked what that would mean for their school, it became clear they did not know what “reconstituted” meant and that they had simply heard the word used in a negative way.

Community Perspectives

Parents and school staff commented on the increased involvement of families as part of the transformation effort. They noted that the school’s parent-teacher-student organization has greater involvement, and parents have had a more visible presence in the school as volunteers. The administration considered increasing communication with and involvement of families a central part of the effort to decrease student absences. School leadership has also

worked to increase communication on the transformation efforts and goals to build awareness, garner support, counteract negative portrayals in the media, and build a common language.

Community members, including those in faith-based organizations and nonprofits, as well as political officials, were interviewed about their perspective on the CFHS Transformation. Most of the respondents expressed hope that the reforms would take hold and outcomes for students would improve, but they were worried that the damage done to the school culture was so great it might not be able to be overcome. As one community member stated when asked how confident he was about whether CFHS would improve:

I'm not confident at all. . . . It needs the cooperation of all, and I'm not sure we have that yet. Most importantly, the teachers and administrators have to be singing from the same page. If they are not, that is a problem. So I'm not confident that this is going to happen. I'm hopeful that it will be better, but I'm not confident.

Several interviewees specified that they wanted to keep their involvement minimal given tensions among the district, the union, and the teachers, especially because they had existing good relationships with some or all sides.

Students and community members also were concerned about the media's portrayal of the high school and particularly the transformation effort. Nearly all felt the vast majority of media commentary focused on the negative aspects of the transformation and rarely highlighted the progress and achievements of the community and its high school. They believe that the constant negative coverage further lowered morale.

Summary of Strategic Goal 3

School climate was affected by the behavior of teachers, students, and other staff, as well as elements of the transformation plan itself. Excessive teacher absences within the first two quarters of the school year stressed the school and classroom environment. Some teachers found the performance management system, initiated to assess teacher effectiveness through evaluation, useful, but many questioned its objectivity and fairness, particularly connected with Domain 4, professional responsibilities, which incorporated assessments of teacher attendance and professional behavior outside the classroom. After initial concerns, student behavior issues within the building began to improve with the hiring of restorative specialists and the implementation of a tracking system that enabled behavior incidents to be addressed more quickly and efficiently. Interview and survey data show that school leadership and teachers have divergent views about the progress of the reform and suggest that communication between them needs significant attention.

V. Summary

Reform efforts in the first year of transformation have shown initial signs of progress, as well as areas that require further improvement. Improving school climate seems to be the strategic goal that garnered the least amount of positive feedback from CFHS staff.

Staff Perceptions of Progress

There was general consistency among responses to the following survey question: “In what areas has CFHS made the most progress this year?” Several teachers and other staff referenced credit recovery programs and/or Multiple Pathways programs specifically when answering this question.

Other areas cited as needing improvement included higher levels of graduation rates, more success with mainstreaming special education students, as well as increased academic gains that were related to changes in instructional practices. Teachers also commented on challenges related to a lack of leadership and feelings of alienation and intimidation that were climate-related. Other teachers responded that no progress had taken place at CFHS this year, while a few teacher and other staff comments characterized “other” categories that are represented in Figure 24.¹⁶

Asked about her perceptions of progress, the superintendent adds, “Everything needs improvement: climate, culture, everything. It will take continuous planning, PD [professional development], course offerings, teacher leaders, etc. Each step is a movement to make transformation real to everybody.”

¹⁶ Please see Appendix G for a complete listing of all responses to this staff survey question on progress CFHS has made this year.

FIGURE 24

Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Year 1 Progress

Theme	Respondent Group	Exemplar Quotes
Multiple Pathways Programs	Teachers	"The alternative program at Guide to Success for under credited, over aged students was a great success!"
		"I believe administration and some teachers have made great efforts to assist students with academic success (especially with PM School and the G2S efforts)."
	Other Staff	"Creating Multiple Pathways programs for students to graduate. Credit recovery programs made a big difference this year."
		"Credit recovery programs allowed students who were lacking credits to catch up with their classmates."
Academics & Instructional Practices	Teachers	"The most progress has been made in instructional strategies, classroom assessment, and curriculum exploration."
		"Basic-level intervention in lower house classes."
		"Instructional needs for individual students were addressed."
Other Progress at CFHS	Teachers	"Having a plan for the future."
		"Weekly leadership cohort meetings."
	Other Staff	"Accountability for all staff."
		"Improved and accurate systems of documentation."
		"PD [professional development] and community and family engagement successes."
No Progress	Teachers	"There has been no progress to speak of. Morale is low, attendance is low, and scores are stagnant."
		"I cannot say that I have seen any significant improvements."

NOTE. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychology, social work, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

Areas in Need of Further Improvement

On the survey, CFHS staff members were asked to respond to the following question, “In what areas does CFHS need further improvement?” Responses indicate that many teachers and other staff identified student discipline as an area that is in need of further improvement within CFHS. Comments across respondent groups also suggest that a more systemic approach to classroom management and student attendance is needed. Staff suggested implementing buildingwide policies and procedures as a solution that would address these concerns. Figure 25 displays a sample of these responses from the three most frequently reported themes.¹⁷

Seven teachers also wrote about a need for further curriculum development and curriculum alignment across content areas. One teacher reported that additional planning was needed to “solidify the math curriculum,” in particular. Other suggestions for improvements were increased parent engagement, designation of exemplar teachers as mentors to peers to improve performance, and alternative placements for special needs and ESL students.

FIGURE 25

Examples of CFHS Teacher and Staff Perceptions of Further Improvements Needed

Theme	Respondent Group	Exemplar Quotes
Discipline & Behavior Management	Teachers	“We need discipline policies that address the attendance and tardiness problems that create the greatest barrier to student achievement.”
		“A functional behavior management system that supports the teachers and establishes norms and expectations with the students that communicate and support success.”
	Other Staff	“There was absolutely no discipline toward students especially concerning hats, phones, iPods, cutting class, acting out in class, coming in tardy. These issues prevent all students from learning, and we need a policy to enforce consistent rules.”
Communication	Teachers	“Communication between faculty and administration needs to be strengthened.”
	Other Staff	“The leadership team does not communicate their vision to the faculty, so no one understands where we are going, and it makes it difficult to help the students achieve their goals.”
Climate & Culture	Teachers	“I believe we need to improve the school culture specifically among the faculty. Many faculty members have a negative attitude toward students and administration and even their fellow teachers.”
		“The consistent turnover in leadership has completely handcuffed the teachers when it comes to being effective. Teachers need support in every aspect of their jobs, and it has not been given either by local admin or central office.”
	Other Staff	“We need teachers to adopt a commitment to high standards.”

NOTE. Other staff may include leadership, guidance, school psychologist, social workers, the school nurse, and the school librarian.

Future of CFHS

Individuals who commented on the chance for the transformation's success had mixed opinions. While some stakeholders were skeptical about meeting graduation rate goals, individuals directly involved in the Multiple Pathways Options expressed high confidence in reaching their goals. Similarly, individuals directly involved in math instruction also expressed high confidence in increasing performance.

However, many teachers expressed little or no confidence that the climate and culture of the school could be transformed. They mentioned several obstacles facing improvement, including a perceived lack of power by the school leadership team to make changes due to bureaucratic obstacles. There was a perceived lack of consistency amplified by the need for faculty and staff to address too many problems simultaneously. As one teacher noted:

[T]hey have to entertain so many customers right now that I think they're missing some valuable opportunities to develop the kind of culture among teachers that can truly make teachers feel that they're a part of something great.

Several teachers and staff agreed that the transformation should be a shared effort. They noted that more faculty members should be involved in the process and that the leadership team should make a concerted effort to include them. More specifically, they noted that to improve the climate and culture there needed to be more consistency and transparency.

¹⁷ Please see Appendix H for a complete listing of all responses to this staff survey question on further improvements needed at CFHS.

VI. Recommendations

The first year of transformation at CFHS has been a challenging one for everyone involved. The literature on school turnaround is clear: transformation is hard work. Below, recommendations are offered for the CFHS school community to help address some of the challenges of transformation.

1. Actively engage teachers in reform planning, leadership, and implementation.

Designation as a persistently lowest-achieving school comes with a host of requirements: the hiring of new leadership, the evaluation of all staff, the creation of action plans and budgets, and the development of new programs and interventions. In order to successfully address these requirements, CFHS teachers, staff, and leadership must work together. This is an enormous challenge, as survey and interview data suggest that although circumstances have improved since late 2010, the CFHS community is still fractured. The teacher interview data suggests that school leadership should consider new approaches to soliciting teacher feedback, specifically to improve the quality and timeliness of teacher input and to increase participation. Creating effective structures, processes, and policies that include teachers in decision making will strengthen a culture that embraces shared responsibility for student learning.

Building this sense of shared responsibility needs to be an ongoing process. We recommend better utilization of existing resources, such as greater input from the Performance Management “Bench” and teachers, to support these efforts. The “Bench,” for example, can help identify potential teacher leaders to improve the following areas: development opportunities; the quality, acceptance, and use of teacher supports; and the effectiveness of communication with teachers.

2. Develop regular opportunities to discuss/address the progress and challenges of the transformation effort and its distinct initiatives with staff, students, and the wider school community.

An ongoing, open dialogue among leadership, staff, and students is critical to generating broader ownership of the overall transformation effort. Publicly sharing up-to-date school data will reinforce the goals and vision of the transformation efforts. Group data, by team and/or grade level for example, should be collected and shared in addition to schoolwide data. Presenting these data will provide reflective opportunities for all stakeholders to recognize and celebrate successes. This will also provide an opportunity to collectively address challenges to continued academic improvements. Widespread reporting of progress on a shorter timeframe will increase the opportunities for collaboration and the responsiveness of the reform effort to emerging needs. Progress monitoring involving the school community will also improve staff understanding of the transformation effort, provide an opportunity to disseminate a consistent message schoolwide, and maintain an awareness of the reform efforts.

3. Comprehensively examine mathematics classroom data in conjunction with student performance on NECAP testing.

According to school records, approximately 80 percent of students passed their mathematics courses each quarter in 2010-2011. These classroom data demonstrate an inconsistency with NECAP data, which show less than ten percent of tested students reaching proficiency in math. This inconsistency suggests a need to examine what gaps exist in mathematics courses and why. Key focus areas may include which mathematics classes students are taking. Three questions may help illustrate this point:

- 1) Are students taking key subjects including algebra I, algebra II, and geometry prior to NECAP testing?
- 2) Is mathematics content being consistently delivered across classes and teachers?
- 3) Are grading practices consistent across classes and teachers?

The staff survey shows that 65 percent of staff overall agree or strongly agree that teachers at CFHS are engaged in systematic analysis of their teaching practices. Staff should build on these efforts – drawing on formative, teacher-developed assessments and statewide tests – to guide mathematics instruction. The initial implementation of the new mathematics curriculum in the 2011-2012 school year provides CFHS the opportunity to examine the sequencing and delivery of appropriate and rigorous mathematics content across grade levels.

4. Maintain investments in Multiple Pathways Programs, the Academic Enhancement Center, and behavior management and collaborate to improve the consistency and effectiveness of advisories.

CFHS students face many obstacles, but with flexibility and support, they can succeed in school. One of the highlights of the transformation effort was the Multiple Pathways Programs, which offered students alternate ways to earn credit and re-engage in school. The Academic Enhancement Center also continues to be a well-used resource. While behavior issues challenged the transformation effort from the onset of the school year, investments in restorative/behavior specialists and a behavior monitoring system have begun to address the problem. Documenting and communicating behavior management protocols and expectations is essential to building on these initial successes. Continued monitoring and investment in these strategies is crucial to sustaining the pace of improvement.

Advisories, however, did not live up to their promise during the first transformation year for many teacher and students. Teachers, leadership, and students need to work together to improve the utility of advisories. Specific recommendations supported by our data collection include developing clear expectations for the use of advisories, providing additional supports for teachers, and drawing on the experience of those who report advisories as useful.

5. Develop clear expectations for the use of common planning time and a widely understood rationale for it as a key instructional support.

One of the most important steps to improve supports for teachers is the development of a set of clearer expectations for the use of common planning time. Currently, the quality and acceptance of common planning time varies dramatically. Teachers report that effective use of common planning time is the exception, not the norm. We recommend selecting, training, and supporting team leaders/facilitators for common planning time. This can provide additional quality control required to increase the utility and support of common planning time. Ensuring that common planning time is effective is central to immediate improvement goals and establishing a positive staff culture focused on student achievement. This should be a top priority.

6. Establish the performance management process as a key driver of instructional support and individual growth.

The performance management system does have a dual purpose: for the majority of teachers it is intended to be a support for improving practice, but it is also supposed to identify teachers who have not made progress. Our data suggests that teachers internalized the latter, punitive purpose, but not the former, more supportive aspect of the performance management system. Teachers need to hear stronger messages about the benefits of the process. The Bench should play an active role in consistent communication of the goals of the performance management system by highlighting teachers who have benefited from the process. The Bench should also consider improvements that will make the process more supportive to teachers, such as expanding the Bench to address all content areas; matching Bench members' content expertise with the teachers' content areas; and providing opportunities for teachers to observe strong instructional practices.

Leadership must also be transparent about the criteria they use to assess the professional responsibilities domain. Our data demonstrated that this portion of the review was particularly contentious. It must be clear that this domain, and therefore the performance management process at large, is understood as a fair, objective process, even when it results in negative consequences for some teachers. Without this assurance, teachers will continue to see the process as a "gotcha" scheme and question the supports the process can provide to the majority of staff. The full implementation of a robust performance management system requires substantial integration between teachers' instructional improvement needs and the supports and professional development they receive. Tying the performance management system more closely to professional development delivery and examining how common planning time is used will simultaneously increase teacher support for both processes.

Conclusion

This report has utilized quantitative and qualitative research methods to highlight the successes and challenges faced by Central Falls High School in its first year of Transformation Plan implementation. One of the greatest successes of the reform effort centers on Goal 1, the multifaceted approach to increasing the graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates. The school rapidly developed and implemented multiple programs to target the needs of struggling students. Both tutoring and alternative graduation pathways are now available to students. Related to Goal 2, CFHS has also begun to make several fundamental improvements in math by implementing a math intervention program and developing a mathematics curriculum. This should provide a solid foundation for improving proficiency levels as outlined in the Transformation Plan.

The biggest challenge to Transformation efforts is Goal 3, improving climate and culture. Tensions between leadership and staff at the onset of the transformation process have persisted throughout the first year of implementation. As such, improving the climate and culture of the school has proven to be the most difficult of the three transformation goals. Teacher absenteeism, ineffective communication between leadership and staff, and a perceived lack of authentic engagement have contributed to the struggle to develop a positive school culture at Central Falls High School. It should be noted that school culture can be difficult to change because it is set in deep-rooted beliefs and practices; thus, it is not surprising that after just one year challenges continue to exist.

Despite these challenges, encouraging signs for improving culture are evident for the near future of CFHS. Stakeholders agree that the culture needs to change. The challenge for next year will be to engage everyone – teachers, students, administrators, and the community – in changing the culture. Focusing on building relationships, engagement, and shared accountability will be critical during the 2011-2012 school year and is a key step toward building a school community with the positive culture necessary to break the persistent cycle of low achievement at Central Falls High School.

Central Falls High School Staff Survey Protocol

APPENDIX B

School Climate, Communication, and Teaching Practices

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
CFHS has a clear vision of reform that is linked to standards for student learning and development.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff and leadership openly discuss efforts to improve CFHS.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers use data to improve their teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
CFHS has made changes designed to better meet the needs of its diverse student body.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are engaged in systematic analysis of student performance data.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment of student performance has led to changes in our school's curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
CFHS has well-defined plans for instructional improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers at CFHS share a vision of effective teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers at CFHS are engaged in systematic analysis of their teaching practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Useful information to make informed decisions is readily available to teachers (e.g., about student performance, available resources, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
CFHS uses assessment				

data to evaluate teachers' instructional practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Curricula is planned between and among grades to promote continuity.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers meet regularly to discuss student performance and instructional practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers use formative assessment strategies to measure student progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are committed to improving student achievement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication between high school leadership and teachers has improved over the course of this school year.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Professional Development Experiences

2 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Professional Development (PD) experiences this year have been closely connected to the reform vision at CFHS.	☐	☐	☐	☐
PD experiences this year have been coherently focused.	☐	☐	☐	☐
PD experiences this year have helped me understand my students better.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers have been able to use knowledge or information gained from attending PD this year in the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐
PD experiences this year have helped build new skills and identify strategies to better meet the needs of students.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Open Response Questions

3 In what areas has CFHS made the most progress this year? Please describe. *

Please write your answer here:

4 In what areas does CFHS need further improvement? Please describe. *

Please write your answer here:

5 Do you feel advisory has been beneficial to students this year? Please describe examples of the activities you've implemented in advisory this year. *

Please write your answer here:

6 Do you feel performance management activities have been beneficial to teachers this year? Why or why not? Please provide examples of the ways performance management has or has not been beneficial. *

Please write your answer here:

English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Curricula

****The following four survey items are for teachers of English, mathematics, science, and social studies/ history. If you do NOT teach in these content areas, you have completed the survey. Thank you!**

****If you teach English, mathematics, science, or social studies/ history, please respond to the following four items. Thank you!**

7 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
The curriculum in my content area is aligned with academic measures, e.g., common course assessments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pacing guides are used by teachers in my content area to ensure curricular continuity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The pacing guides have helped me ensure that I cover all of the necessary components in my classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The scope and sequence of curriculum topics in my content area are appropriate for my students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

07-05-2011 – 00:00

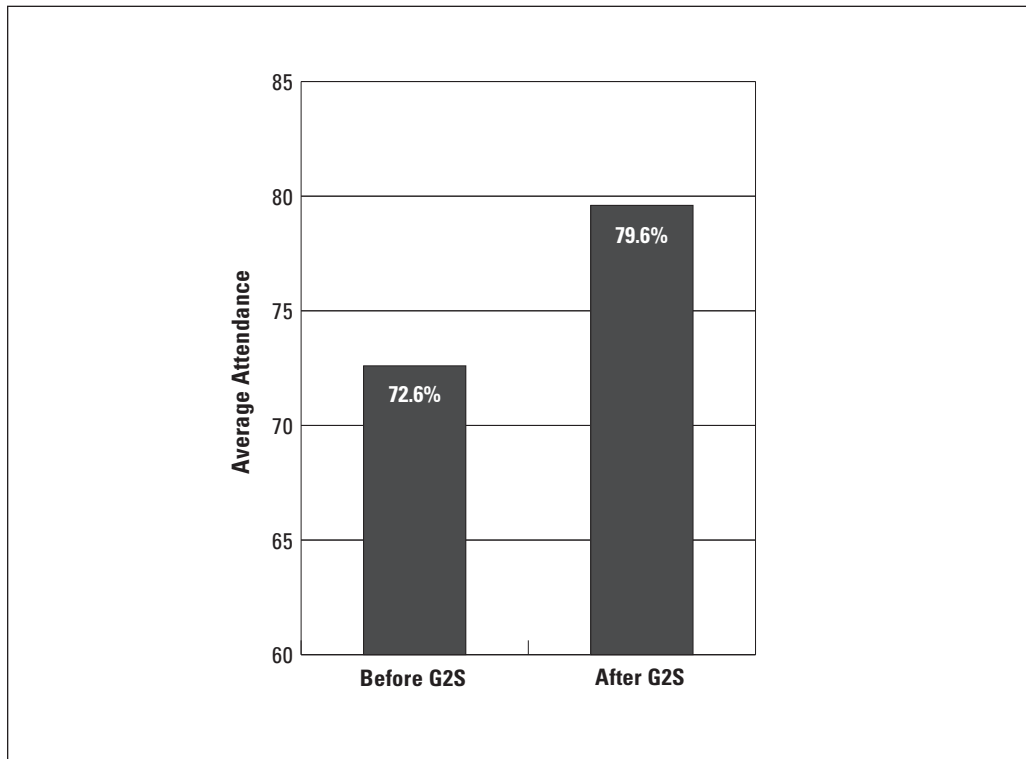
Submit your survey.

Thank you for completing this survey.

Student Attendance before and after Guide 2 Success

APPENDIX C

Average Attendance for Guide 2 Success Students before and after G2S Programming
N=47



DATA SOURCE: Central Falls High School MMS student information system.

Complete Listing of Open-Responses on Advisory

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel advisory has been beneficial to students this year? Please describe examples of the activities you've implemented in advisory this year.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 36 responses*)	1. Advisory is a waste of 22 minutes. I know my students. it was nice to get a break to sit and chat with them, but it is an overall waste of time and money.
	2. Advisory need to use better.
	3. Advisory needs to be graded. Students do not take it seriously. The time spent on advisory could be better spent towards instructional time. How much personalization is too much personalization?
	4. Advisory this year has been a joke. At the beginning I tried to the lessons put out every week. However, over the course of the year they became rote and boring. The students lost interest as did I. Also I ended up having to plan for advisory as if it was another period because the lessons provided were horrible.
	5. Advisory was a success due to students being placed by academy
	6. Did the restorative circle. It was fine to touch base about weekends. Did review goal sheets. Followed what we were told to do by K. Centazzo.
	7. I believe a majority of teachers do not value advisory. I believe they see it as a break, down time or free time.
	8. I feel advisory had a lot of little issues. The everyday advisory was too much for the students and the short time periods. Students need longer time with consistency with one teacher.
	9. I have not found it to of benefit. I have tried role play discussion.
	10. N/A
	11. No
	12. NO
	13. No 20 minutes too short
	14. No-
	15. No-22 minutes is not long enough to do anything meaningful. Lessons for the week are sometimes not received until Monday morning leaving little or no time to plan effectively for a 22 minute period.
	16. No, everyday is too much that students were getting discussed.
	17. No. No time for planning; plan for the week comes out on the Tuesday of that week; activities greatly disliked by students

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel advisory has been beneficial to students this year?
Please describe examples of the activities you've implemented in advisory this year.

Teachers (n=36 teachers: 36 responses*)	18. No. Students have chosen not to attend. Students were able to choose topics and still did not attend.
	19. No. Students knew that they were not being graded for it so they refused to do anything that was asked of them because they knew that they could say no and get away with it. However, it was a good time to build personalization amongst the students and build better relationships amongst each other.
	20. No. 20 minutes a day is too much. Our ninth graders have a pretty full schedule so by the time advisory rolled around, they could use a little break. Realize that there are many ways to build strong relationships with your students...it doesn't always have to be prescribed.
	21. No. It is very difficult to accomplish much of anything in 20 minutes that has real meaning.
	22. No. The daily advisory block has simply turned into unstructured time, as the majority of teachers and students had no buy-in.
	23. No. Too often and not a school wide supported effort.
	24. Not especially...the program was poorly organized and students were disengaged, many teachers reported that they felt it was useless.
	25. somewhat
	26. Somewhat beneficial lacks organization
	27. somewhat; reviewing portfolios, getting to know students on a personal level
	28. Somewhat. Personalization activities.
	29. Writing individual learning plan.
	30. Yes
	31. Yes Daily check in Goal for the week
	32. Yes it has been beneficial. This year, we ran a gender specific advisory, parenting advisory, and career development advisory.
	33. Yes, advisory has been beneficial. Working with students on portfolio preparation as well as discussing social issues that affect the young people of this community has been a great benefit to the students.
	34. Yes, it was a great check-in for students to feel safe to ask for help with areas of difficulty both academically and social-emotionally.
	35. Yes. My advisory has been a positive opportunity to communicate with students and have the opportunity to informally teach social and problem solving skills. Additionally, the students in my group know exactly where they stand in terms of portfolio preparation.
	36. Yes...I think they are a great benefit to students and the community

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel advisory has been beneficial to students this year?
Please describe examples of the activities you've implemented in advisory this year.

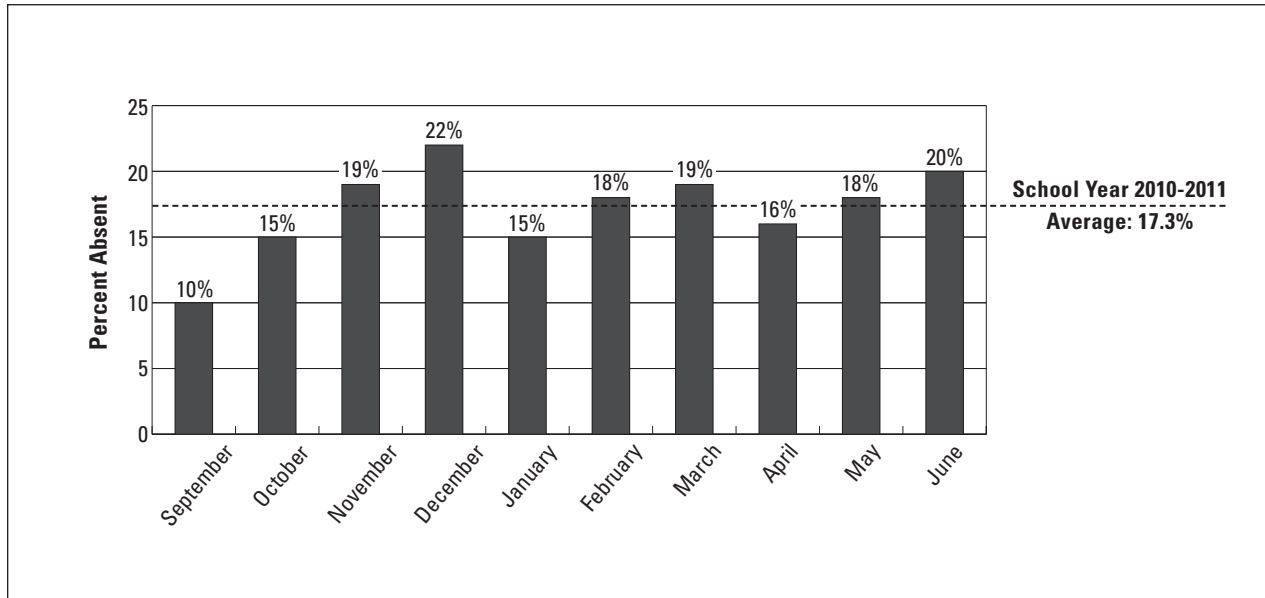
Other Staff (n=7 other staff: 7 responses*)	1. Advisory was not VALUED by the Leadership Team. Only scheduled for 22 minutes a day during lunches it was a complete failure. Not enough time to do meaningful lessons or to create bonds between students in order to get to "know" each other better. Many teachers did not even "DO" advisory because there was no supervision of the advisory program.
	2. Hi Lo Restorative Circles have been good. The 22 minutes too short. The timing of advisory during the busy lunch hour not good.
	3. Not all teachers made good use of the time allotted.
	4. not consistent
	5. The advisory period was too short. Personalization was attainable but activities were limited due to time constraints.
	6. Unknown
	7. Yes, when properly implemented, many students this year have benefited from participation in Advisory classes; most specifically for support with CCA's, portfolios, and Senior Projects.

* For the purpose of improved clarity, spelling errors have been corrected without changing the phrase content or meaning. Capitalization, grammar, and punctuation have been preserved.

Teacher and Staff Absences Rates, School Year 2010-2011

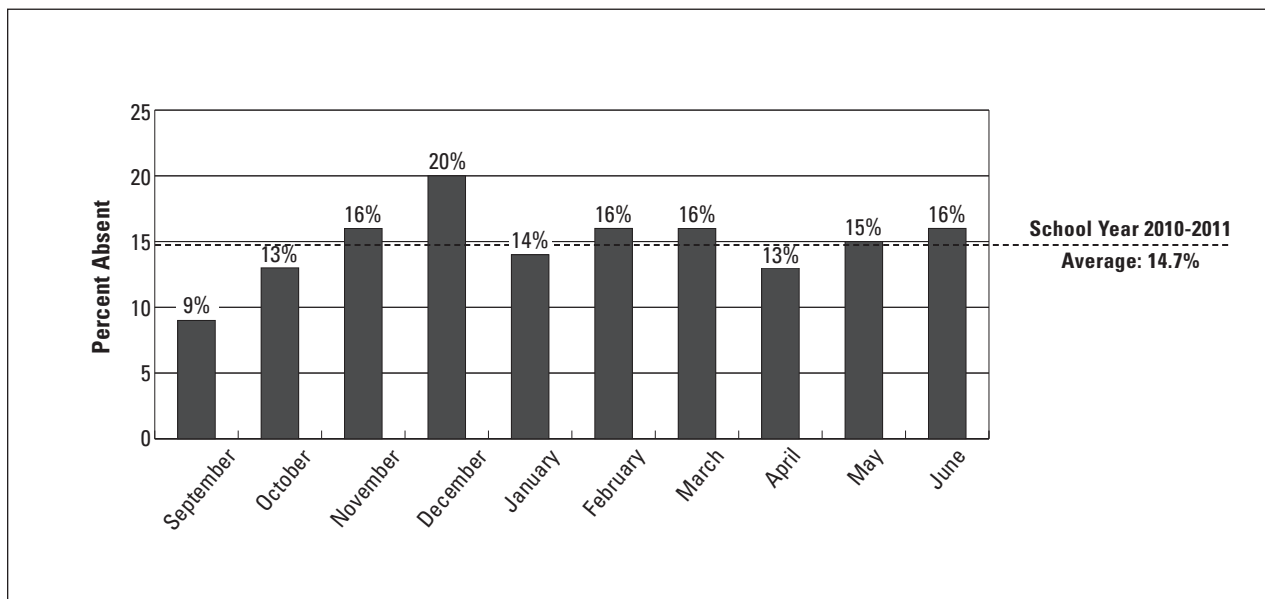
APPENDIX E

Absence Rates Including All Absences and Vacancies



SOURCE: Central Falls High School. Rates were calculated using all absences and vacancies including approved professional time, funeral, and personal days.

Absence Rates Not Including Approved Professional Time, Funeral and Personal Days



SOURCE: Central Falls High School. Calculated absence rates do not include approved professional time, funeral, and personal days.

Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Performance Management

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel performance management activities have been beneficial to teachers this year? Why or why not? Please provide examples of the ways performance activities have or have not been beneficial.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 35 responses*, 1 blank)	1. Absolutely not! It is still not clear what their role is & how teaching practice will be better
	2. I believe my experience was extremely beneficial because I was observed by my director and a second time by my director and a teacher leader.
	3. I do not feel that performance management activities have been as beneficial to teachers this year. I think the teachers were given all the hope in the beginning of the year and things didn't follow through.
	4. I feel this year all parties tried to stay afloat. We really had very little training in the different domains.
	5. If you mean the efforts of the leadership to work through the complex issues of transformation, the management activities have been successful. Empowering students through student centered focus is a powerful way to create student investment in the process. Effort to develop accountability strategies on the part of family, and students in the process would benefit from further examination.
	6. In open discussions about performance, I feel teachers gained experience and insight to other teachers' expertise. I learned a lot about how journals impact a classroom environment and how they can be used to enhance learning/check for understanding in a non-intrusive manner. I hope others were able to grow from my experience and input.
	7. looking at data is extremely beneficial to design future practice
	8. Need more PD on performance management and active feedback from classroom observations.
	9. No
	10. No because for new teachers it was never explained and for most teachers that have been here for years never got the proper training except for a book.
	11. No I do not. Performance management is supposed to help students to do better. We have been directed to lower standards to assist students grades therefore we are supposed to make them pass rather we try to help the student to do better.
	12. No ongoing support for teachers who were deemed low scoring. No modeling of lessons. PM did not ask for much teacher input in class selection. Turnaround time was short for setting up class observation which we were told would be a longer period than thurs you will be observed on Mon. Evaluators from outside content areas made assumptions regarding rigor Several informal observations with no feedback.
	13. No- Process is not fair to all teachers
	14. No- too focused on negative feedback with no reinforcement of what is going well. little support to correct deficiencies

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel performance management activities have been beneficial to teachers this year? Why or why not? Please provide examples of the ways performance activities have or have not been beneficial.

Teachers (n=36 teachers: 35 responses*, 1 blank)

15. No-as I noted before these activities have not been used to improve practice. They have been used to build a case for dismissing a teacher not improving practice.
16. No, for the most part. My colleagues have told tales of evaluations that seemed too personal. My evaluations were okay; I found it easy to speak w/ Mary Canole and Wayne Ogden: I found them to be caring and professional. Idealistically we could move the experience closer to the team or academy level where we can evaluate each other's practices professionally.
17. No, There has been no attempt to HELP struggling teachers. It was just a way to find fault and fire those teachers who are outspoken.
18. NO! THE EVALUATION SYSTEM IN THIS SCHOOL IS A JOKE! VERY SUBJECTIVE!
19. NO. I believe evaluators were told in advance how to evaluate. My own evaluator told me she was told "not to make it look too good". Additionally, my observer wrote things in my report that didn't happen (maybe in her mind they did). And, although I implemented my professional growth actions, no one visited for a follow-up observation.
20. No. There is nothing for Inclusion teachers that they provide. Nothing is shared with us. Everything is thrown at us.
21. no. performance management staff was not as professional as they could have been. Punitive and not a time of growth. Teachers should be evaluated by building administrators only.
22. No. Too often the PD is unorganized and the expectations are unclear.
23. Performance management is seriously lacking a component that would help a teacher who is deficient to improve. There has been a lot of emphasis on pointing out deficiencies, but no clearly defined plan or process to promote teacher improvement.
24. Professionals need to be accountable.
25. Somewhat
26. Somewhat, there are still some teachers who do not fully understand the evaluation tool. Teachers are very appreciative and respectful to the evaluators and are willing to build relationships
27. Somewhat. It is always beneficial to be observed and critiqued by your peers. However, the protocols as explained to us at the outset were not followed. It seems to me to have become a way to punish teachers
28. The format was a refresher to my student teaching experience with evaluations and the information needed to complete the process.
29. There was no consistency with performance management. The administration was out on a witch hunt. I received a good evaluation, but overall the process was not fair. Calibration needs to be done. Also, if you really want this tool to work; the teachers need to know that they can make mistakes and learn. There is none of that. Also having an elementary or middle school teacher from a white suburban district telling me what I should or shouldn't be doing is ridiculous. Please give us evaluators of our peers to make this more beneficial and non-threatening.

Staff Survey Question: Do you feel performance management activities have been beneficial to teachers this year? Why or why not? Please provide examples of the ways performance activities have or have not been beneficial.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 35 responses*: 1 blank)	30. This was a year of finger pointing and dismissive toward the teachers. I personally received absolutely no support, training or positive feedback the entire year. Comments too often related to other issues than they were supposed to measure, making it obvious that performance assessment was not the focus.
	31. This was beneficial because it forced clear thinking when planning instruction. The evaluation was an outside judgment provided a point of reference for improving instruction...it was a chance to reflect on effectiveness and ways to improve.
	32. Yes
	33. Yes and No
	34. Yes, the resources and collaboration with evaluators, was very helpful.
	35. Yes, they have provided teachers with growth opportunities.
Other Staff (n=7 other staff: 7 responses*)	1. I think the activities have been good. They are concrete and easily understood. they support the initiative for data collecting.
	2. It created a "toxic" and highly stressful work environment. If evaluations were not good, there was no corrective action plan in place for the teacher to improve. They just said that they can find someone better "out there"
	3. Somewhat, some teachers have used information to improve practice
	4. Unknown
	5. Yes, performance management activities have led to increased accountability for all; relative to student achievement and success. Imbedded in these activities is a system of support as well.
	6. Yes. It provided clear expectations and systematic feedback.
	7. Yes. Teachers have received direct feedback on the 4 domains for improvement. More periodic communications among evaluators and teachers needed.

* For the purpose of improved clarity, spelling errors have been corrected without changing the phrase content or meaning. Capitalization, grammar, and punctuation have been preserved.

Complete Listing of Open-ended Responses on Transformation Progress

APPENDIX G

Staff Survey Question: In what areas has CFHS made the most progress this year? Please describe.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 35 responses*, 1 blank)	1. Alienating teachers
	2. Basic-level intervention in Lower House Classes. Better preparedness for next year due to advanced schedule planning.
	3. Beginning to look more at data for making decisions. Programs are being put into place but there is not involvement or sharing of information with the faculty
	4. CFHS has made the most progress in the area of coming up with an evaluation process that is redundant and intimidating.domains.
	5. Communication with the Media.
	6. Developing accountability, teacher evaluations
	7. Finally suspending repeat offenders.
	8. Getting a small number of the extreme behavior issues into programs that are more beneficial to them
	9. Grad rate
	10. Graduation rate increased
	11. Great progress has been made in meeting the needs of the over-aged, under-credited student.
	12. Having a plan for the future.
	13. I am not sure. Leadership does not clearly communicate to faculty. Many changes are rolled out to the faculty as a done deal. If anything, the climate has not gotten better-it is almost toxic for teachers and students. I think PR about what leadership perceives are positive changes gets to the news media.
	14. I believe administration and some teachers have made great efforts to assist students with academic success. I.e. PM school, G2S, Unified Scholars senior efforts.
	15. I cannot honestly say that I have seen any significant improvements. Behaviors are still a significant issue as evidenced by the high #s of referrals to ISS & 4-6 paid adults "walking the halls."
	16. Implementation of multiple pathways to graduation
	17. In the area of including Special Education students into the mainstream population. Mr. Capellan was SO supportive.
	18. Increasing graduation rate.
	19. Increasing graduation rates
	20. Instructional needs for individual students
	21. Leadership cohort regular meetings 7am weekly

Staff Survey Question: In what areas has CFHS made the most progress this year? Please describe.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 35 responses*, 1 blank)	21. Leadership cohort regular meetings 7am weekly
	22. mainstreaming some students that needed to be.
	23. MAKING A CULTURE OF FEAR & INTIMIDATION
	24. Mentor/Mentee Program
	25. N/A
	26. No progress has been made in any area this year. This has been the most ineffective, disorganized, and most poorly administered year of all 10 that I've taught here.
	27. No progress to speak of. Morale is low, attendance is low, scores are stagnant.
	28. None
	29. None
	30. None - we moved backwards across the board.
	31. None seen.
	32. The alternative program at Guide to Success for under credited over aged students. This was a great success!
	33. The area that CFHS has made the most progress this year is climate. I believe allowing the students to be more involved has made the school year more successful for the students.
	34. The most progress has been made in instructional strategies, classroom assessment, and curriculum exploration.
	35. We have not made any progress this year. We have taken steps backwards in practically every area. WE ARE A MESS! WE ARE WITHOUT "REAL" LEADERSHIP!!!
Other Staff (n=7 other staff: 7 responses*)	1. *Graduation Rate *Climate and Culture *Accountability for all staff *Improved and accurate systems of documentation *The development of procedures, practices, and protocols
	2. Creating multiple pathways programs for students to graduate.
	3. Credit recovery options as well as alternative programming to aid students in attaining a diploma.
	4. Credit recovery programs allowed students who were lacking credits to catch up with their classmates, and allowed some students to graduate on time. Math intervention for all 9th and 10th graders should boost NECAP scores and help some of those students to increase their skills in math.
	5. Multiple Pathways Accountability Celebrations Performance Management
	6. PD and Community and family engagement
	7. Unknown

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Complete Listing of Open-Ended Responses on Suggested Improvements

APPENDIX H

Staff Survey Question: In what areas does CFHS need further improvement? Please describe.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 36 responses*)	1. Administration: communication; effective discipline for students; "style" (currently tyrannical)
	2. Administrative organization, communication, vision, and consistency. Behavior management on the whole school level; a functional behavior management system that supports the teachers and establishes norms and expectation with the students that communicate and support success.
	3. Alternative placements for special needs and ESL students to meet with greater success. Part-time self-containment with gradual placement in inclusion, with supports as needed.
	4. attendance and discipline
	5. Behavior. Rules/Consequences
	6. behavior management; forging open & honest communication w/o fear of retaliation; restorative practices not working.
	7. CFHS needs to prioritize their goals and objectives. There are too many initiatives and directives, all in which lack focus. Communication between the faculty and administration needs to be strengthening.
	8. Climate and Culture, communications, trust
	9. Communicate, communicate.... Plan for effective use of PD time and presentations. Provide for evaluation of PD provided. Improve morale...
	10. communication and trust between teachers and leadership
	11. Communication between faculty and staff. Transparency.
	12. Communication with administrations and teachers. having mentors for first year teachers, and having teachers be highly qualified.
	13. Culture and climate, communication, transparency, preparing for and administering NECAP, building morale, student discipline, PD development
	14. Curriculum alignment with experienced staff
	15. Curriculum development
	16. curriculum/assessment development
	17. Designate exemplar teachers as mentors to peers to improve performance
	18. Discipline

Staff Survey Question: In what areas does CFHS need further improvement? Please describe.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 36 responses*)	19. Discipline for students because there is none. Communication between administration, faculty and staff. Productive PD's, Less people walking around the building "evaluating" us when they don't even know who we are.
	20. Discipline, Professional Development, Communication, Support Services, school climate
	21. Educating regular education teachers about special education students
	22. Electives should receive content appropriate PD. Many of the questions in this survey point to what I have learned not to my prior knowledge. I may not have learned much because I already knew what was taught. I worked on literacy and curriculum development with the ESL dept in Providence.
	23. Evaluations must stop being used as a punitive device. Administration touts that research shows that student performance is linked to quality teachers and teaching-data collected during evaluations is not used for improvement of practice. It is used punitively.
	24. Further planning to solidify math curriculum.
	25. I believe we need to improve the school culture, specifically among the faculty. Many faculty members have a negative attitude toward students and administration, and even their fellow teachers.
	26. I feel the district needs to better open the lines of communication. Not all teachers are invited or made aware of the different committees/meetings till it's too late.
	27. Instructional strategies that promote achievement for the bulk of the student population. Discipline policies that address the attendance and tardy problems that create the greatest barrier to student achievement.
	28. Leadership. Plain and simple. The consistent turnover in leadership has completely handcuffed the teachers when it comes to being effective. Teachers need support in every aspect of their jobs and it has not been given, either by local admin or central office.
	29. Parental engagement in school.
	30. Professionally develop teachers based on what their needs are. Let finally conduct a needs assessment of the building if we are going to be data driven. We need to develop a positive culture within the school. It is not going to happen with this administration. NEVER! I have been employed with many school districts and in the private sector; never have I encountered faulty leadership like we have. The administration makes this place toxic. Please give us new leadership. I have no problems changing the way I do things; but I want someone competent and "human" to lead us
	31. RESPECT FOR TEACHERS & COMMUNICATION TO TEACHERS MUST IMPROVE
	32. student behavior management personalization/communication between staff and leadership
	33. Technology, curriculum design, classroom management
	34. The areas that CFHS needs further improvement is the reading and math intervention programs. I feel the students are not given the solid everyday intervention that most students need. This would allow students to make great gains in NECAP.

Staff Survey Question: In what areas does CFHS need further improvement? Please describe.	
Teachers (n=36 teachers: 36 responses*)	35. The school needs to continue to explore curriculum development. The students would benefit from community based career exploration and applied learning opportunities focused on transition to post secondary careers and independent living. In any transition period, change and loss of the past practices are emotional and painful. In this case, the focus has been, rightfully so, on the structural components of the transformation process. However, no process is value neutral. Powerful emotional aspects are at play. Attention to this aspect of the change process through the application of specialist skills may help create a more positive and healthy transition process.
	36. We have no discipline enforcement in the school. We have no curriculum in place, no guidance as to what should be taught and very little cooperative agreement as to class work between teachers who are teaching the same courses. We had no defined pacing guidance either.
Other Staff (n=7 other staff: 7 responses*)	1. *Performance Management *Relations between teachers and leadership *Operational Management
	2. Communication between leadership and staff.
	3. Communications Curriculum Formative Assessments
	4. Leadership Team does not communicate their vision to the faculty, so no one understands where we are going, which makes it difficult to help them achieve their goals. There was an air of fear and intimidation towards teachers all year, and it was an extremely difficult and stressful environment to work in. Anyone who spoke up was transferred or had things put into their evaluations. There was absolutely NO DISCIPLINE towards students especially concerning Hats, Phones, I-Pods, Cutting Classes, coming in tardy, acting out in classes that prevents ALL students from learning. Restorative practices although new, was a dismal failure. Leadership Team needs to establish Communication with faculty and a new type of discipline that is effective for both students and creating a environment conducive to learning. Leadership team needs to get vigilant about teacher and student attendance, and student tardiness.
	5. Teacher instructional practices and assessment.
	6. Teachers commitment to high standards
	7. Unknown

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